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The situation in Afghanistan

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The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/11 and Security Council resolution 2344 (2017), in which I was requested to report every three months on developments in Afghanistan.

2. The report provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Afghanistan, including political, humanitarian, development and human rights efforts, since the issuance of my report of 3 March 2017 (A/71/826-S/2017/189). It also provides a summary of key political and security developments and regional and international events relating to Afghanistan.

II. Relevant developments

3. The National Unity Government made some progress on priority reforms, as well as on high-level appointments. Afghan authorities advanced electoral preparations with the approval of a polling centre assessments package. The reporting period was otherwise dominated by the return to Afghanistan of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Hizb-i Islami (Gulbuddin) faction. Hekmatyar's return took place at a time of flux in Afghan politics, which is partly driven by increased jockeying among political figures ahead of the 2019 presidential elections. The First Vice-President, Abdul Rashid Dostum, left the country in mid-May reportedly for medical treatment in Turkey, his Junbish-e Milli party became increasingly vocal in its opposition to the Government, and personalities within the Jamiat-e-Islami party started positioning themselves. Meanwhile, there was no discernible progress on peace talks between the Government and the Taliban. An increase in multilateral engagement at the regional level was, however, observed. Afghanistan and Pakistan made efforts to improve relations despite occasional border clashes. The security situation remained very volatile, with an

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increase in security incidents in the first five months of the year over the same period in 2016. On 31 May, Kabul witnessed a suicide attack, which killed at least 65 people and injured more than 300, further straining the already fragile political situation and leading to several days of public demonstrations, some of which became violent. High levels of violence against civilians and significant internal displacement continued to be recorded. Economic growth, while slightly improved, remained low throughout the reporting period.

A. Political developments

4. The President, Ashraf Ghani, and the Chief Executive, Abdullah Abdullah, made progress on high-level appointments, which had previously been a source of tension within the National Unity Government. A security appointments board was established in March, headed by a new Minister of State for Reform in the Security Sector, to address the need for merit-based promotions in the security sector. On 11 March, the Chair of the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission was appointed, a position that had been vacant since December 2015. The Government made further senior-level appointments and nominated four cabinet members: the Minister of Mines and Petroleum, the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, the State Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and the State Minister of Tourism Affairs. However, the future of six other ministers who were the subject of parliamentary no-confidence votes in November 2016 remained uncertain, and some parliamentarians continued to call upon the Government to introduce new candidates for those ministries.

5. On 27 March, the lower house of the National Assembly interpellated the Minister of Defence, the Minister of the Interior and the Director of the National Directorate of Security following a deadly attack on a military hospital in Kabul earlier that month. All survived no-confidence votes. However, the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Army Staff subsequently resigned from their positions following an attack on an Afghan army base in Balkh Province on 21 April, which resulted in mass casualties and a significant public backlash against the country's security leadership. Separately, the lower house of the National Assembly suspended the salaries of nine members as a result of their frequent absences.

6. The approaching presidential election of 2019 began to affect various political alliances. Divisions within the Jamiat-e-Islami political party were increasingly apparent. The Governor of Balkh Province, Atta Mohammad Noor, publicly criticized Chief Executive Abdullah on 13 March for failing to obtain sufficient positions for Jamiat members within the Government and continued to engage with President Ghani to achieve that goal. Separately, on 16 April, President Ghani dismissed the Jamiat Deputy Chairperson, Ahmed Zia Massoud, from his Cabinet-level position as Special Envoy for Reforms and Good Governance. Massoud had been an early supporter of Ghani's campaign in 2014, although after being dismissed he publicly expressed his regret for having done so. Meanwhile, the Jamiat-e-Islami party expanded its leadership council, and the party announced on 23 May its intention to nominate a presidential candidate for the elections in 2019.

7. First Vice-President Dostum remained under investigation for the alleged abduction and sexual assault of a political rival in November 2016. He was confined to his home in Kabul until 19 May, when he travelled to Turkey, reportedly for medical treatment. On 11 March, hundreds of supporters from Dostum's Junbish-e Milli party gathered at his house and named his son, Batur Dostum, acting head of the party. On 26 April, about 2,000 Junbish supporters rallied in Shibirghan city, Jowzjan Province, and on 5 May in Mazar-e Sharif, Balkh Province, to protest

against the Government's perceived exclusion of the First Vice-President and alleged bias against non-Pashtun ethnicities.

8. The leader of Hizb-i Islami (Gulbuddin), Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, appeared in public in Afghanistan for the first time in more than 20 years on 29 April in Laghman Province. Hekmatyar's return was part of a peace agreement concluded between the Government and Hizb-i Islami in September 2016. On 1 May, President Ghani signed a decree authorizing the release of the first batch of prisoners affiliated with Hizb-i Islami (Gulbuddin), and the following day the release of 55 prisoners was announced. On 4 May, Hekmatyar arrived in Kabul in an armed convoy and gave a speech at the Presidential Palace to a large audience of State officials and other political leaders. President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah and the former President, Hamid Karzai, were in attendance, but some prominent members of the rival Jamiat-e-Islami party were notably absent. President Ghani welcomed Hekmatyar's return as an important step towards peace and reconciliation. However, human rights defenders and civil society groups expressed concern that Hekmatyar's return could lead to a reversal of the gains in human, political and civil rights made since the collapse of the Taliban regime. Hekmatyar began discussions with Hizb-i Islami (Arghandiwal), a political party faction whose members already participate in the administration. Rival political actors expressed concern that if the Hizb-i Islami (Gulbuddin) and (Arghandiwal) united, it could become the country's largest political party.

9. On 1 April, the Government outlined its vision for peace in a document released to international donors. The document highlighted the need for an inclusive peace process to bring an end to the conflict and to consolidate credible institutions to channel political differences. It also proposed structural changes and a curtailed mandate to the High Peace Council. Subsequently, the Government circulated a draft peace and reconciliation strategic plan to international donors on 18 May. Also on 1 April, the President appointed a new Head of the secretariat for the High Peace Council, which had been vacant since 19 November 2016. On 6 June, President Ghani announced the appointment of the former Vice-President, Karim Khalili, as the new Chair of the High Peace Council. There was, however, no discernible progress on peace talks between the Government and the Taliban.

10. Within the context of a broader Afghan-led process, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) supported nine ongoing local peace initiatives in nine different provinces during the reporting period. Through those initiatives, UNAMA provided technical and logistical support to assist Afghan entities in the sustainable and non-violent resolution of conflicts and grievances. Conflicts addressed include land disputes, the security of highways, and religious radicalization. On 6 April, UNAMA supported a conference on women's role in the peace process in Herat Province, which 100 participants from 13 districts attended. Participants called for concrete action to implement the country's national action plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

11. The Government made some progress on electoral preparations during the reporting period. In April, the Independent Election Commission approved a polling centre assessment package, which includes an operational plan, procedures and budget. The assessment fulfils one of the recommendations of the Special Electoral Reform Commission. On 1 March, the President appointed a new Chief Electoral Officer to head the Independent Election Commission secretariat, which had been vacant since June 2014. Meanwhile, the Electoral Complaints Commission started to draft a gender policy aimed at, among others, improving the representation of women in the Commission and began its recruitment process. While the Government reiterated its commitment to holding elections during the current

Afghan year, which ends in March 2018, key decisions, including on the constituencies, budget, timeline and funding modalities, have not been made.

12. The Government and the Independent Election Commission continued to consider options for the introduction of new technology for future elections. On 11 March, the Independent Election Commission presented a technical study to the Government and donors, which determined that new technology should be used for the next elections, and in April, the Independent Election Commission commissioned a feasibility study to assess the possibility of introducing new technology. The Government and the Independent Election Commission continued to explore modalities to introduce the use of new technology.

13. In March, the Government reached a decision on an electronic national identification card, after a long impasse. The distribution of such identification cards is one of the commitments in the 2014 political agreement on the establishment of the National Unity Government. On 20 March, the Government adopted an action plan and decided to commence distribution of the cards. On 22 April, President Ghani issued a legislative decree, subsequently approved by the lower house of the National Assembly on 8 May, amending the Population Registration Law to provide that ethnicity and nationality would be reflected on the cards. On 13 May, a Presidential decree was issued, which, among others, required commencement of a pilot phase of the plan within 90 days.

B. Security

14. The security situation in Afghanistan remained intensely volatile. UNAMA recorded 5,687 security-related incidents in Afghanistan between January and the end of March 2017, the highest total ever recorded for that period since 2001. Between 1 March and 31 May, the United Nations recorded 6,252 security-related incidents, which represents a 2 per cent increase against the same period in 2016. In line with established trends, armed clashes accounted for the majority (64 per cent) of security incidents, followed by improvised explosive devices (16 per cent). Targeted killings and abductions decreased by 4 per cent compared with the same period in 2016. The eastern and southern regions were the most volatile, with a 22 per cent increase in incidents in the eastern region compared with the same period in 2016. The Taliban focused their attacks on Badakhshan, Baghlan, Farah, Faryab, Helmand, Kunar, Kunduz, Laghman, Sari Pul, Zabul and Uruzgan Provinces. Taliban attacks against the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces around Lashkar Gah and surrounding districts in Helmand Province were repelled after the Afghan National Army Special Forces received support through international military-conducted air strikes. The number of air strikes was significantly higher (112 per cent) compared with the same period in 2016.

15. On 28 April, the Taliban announced the launch of their annual spring offensive, "Operation Mansouri". Their statement in 2017 described a two-track approach involving military and political objectives, including advice to minimize civilian casualties and to focus on targeting foreign forces in Afghanistan and their Afghan partners. However, there has not been any significant improvement in civilian casualty statistics. On the day of the announcement, the Taliban captured the strategically important Zaybak district in Badakhshan Province, which borders Pakistan. It was retaken several weeks later by Afghan security forces. During the reporting period, the Taliban also temporarily captured Sangin district in Helmand Province, Qal'ah-i Zal district in Kunduz Province and Khwajah Baha' al-Din district in Takhar Province.

16. On 8 March, a complex attack was carried out against the largest military hospital in Afghanistan, located in Kabul. The group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant — Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP) claimed responsibility for the attack, in which 50 persons were reportedly killed, of whom approximately half were military personnel (enjoying protected or hors de combat status), and 88 others were wounded, including at least 22 civilians. On 21 April, the Taliban carried out a complex attack against the headquarters of the Afghan National Army 209 Corps in Mazar-e Sharif, in Balkh Province, which resulted in at least 140 security forces killed and 60 others injured.

17. ISIL-KP maintained a presence in southern Nangarhar Province despite increased military operations carried out by the United States of America and the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. International military forces continued operations, including the use of a "massive ordnance air blast" that killed a reportedly high number of ISIL-KP members in Achin district, Nangarhar Province, on 13 April. In early May, government and United States military officials confirmed that the ISIL-KP leader, Abdul Hasib, had been killed in a United States Special Forces raid conducted on 27 April. ISIL-KP continued its attacks against the civilian population and military and foreign military targets, and unverified local sources claimed that ISIL-KP reinforcements and recruitment continued. The group took responsibility for a complex attack on the National Radio Television of Afghanistan station in Jalalabad on 17 May.

18. On 31 May, a suicide attacker detonated a truck-borne explosive device in the city centre of Kabul. The explosion killed at least 80 people and injured 464, most of whom were civilians. The bomb, one of the largest detonated in Kabul, caused considerable damage to infrastructure in the surrounding area, including a number of diplomatic facilities, forcing some embassies to evacuate personnel. The attack led to several days of protests, in which some protesters were killed, allegedly by security forces, including the son of a Member of Parliament. Suicide bombers at the funeral ceremony for the deceased killed 6 civilians and injured 87, according to preliminary information, in an escalating cycle of violence.

19. By late April, the official number of Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police personnel was at 90.4 per cent and 95.1 per cent of projected levels, respectively, up from 86 per cent and 94 per cent in February, respectively.

20. A total of 11 recorded incidents had an impact on the United Nations, including 1 case of intimidation, 1 incident relating to an improvised explosive device and 5 criminal-related incidents; there were no armed clashes or abductions.

C. Regional cooperation

21. During the reporting period, efforts were made by the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to improve relations, following a period of heightened tensions from late 2016 to early 2017, as noted in my previous report. On 21 March, Pakistan reopened the two official crossing points into Afghanistan, in Torkham and Spin Boldak, which had been closed on 17 February, although the border was closed intermittently throughout the reporting period. On 15 and 16 March, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland hosted high-level bilateral talks attended by the National Security Adviser to the President of Afghanistan, Hanif Atmar, and the Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, which were aimed at building confidence and resulted in the establishment of a cross-border mechanism between the two countries. Tensions remained, however, related partly to ongoing efforts by Pakistan to fence part of the border with Afghanistan, as well as incidents of cross-border shelling. In a positive

development, a high-level Pakistani parliamentary delegation led by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan arrived in Kabul for meetings with Afghan counterparts from 29 April to 1 May. The delegation also met President Ghani and other officials. Shortly afterwards, the head of the Inter-Services Intelligence of Pakistan visited Kabul and met President Ghani and other high-level government officials. Such efforts to improve bilateral relations were subsequently disrupted on 5 May, when border guards from both countries clashed after Pakistani authorities began conducting a census in two villages in a disputed area near the Spin Boldak-Chaman crossing point. Following a negotiated ceasefire, the fighting has stopped, and efforts continue at the political level to resolve the dispute.

22. A number of multilateral and bilateral initiatives continued. On 16 March, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Tajikistan met in Dushanbe to discuss the military-political situation in Afghanistan and the prospect of enhanced Russian-Tajik cooperation. The Heart of Asia senior officials meeting was held on 17 March in Baku, at which participants reaffirmed their commitments to enhancing economic and security cooperation through the Heart of Asia-Istanbul process. Uzbekistan also continued its increased engagement in Afghanistan, including by appointing a Special Representative for Afghanistan on 25 May. During a visit to the Russian Federation on 4 and 5 April, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, stated that peace in Afghanistan must be reached through negotiations. In April, Kazakhstan held the second round of political consultations with Afghanistan in Astana. On 14 April, the Russian Federation hosted a conference on Afghanistan in Moscow, with representatives of China, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in attendance. Other invitees included Turkmenistan and the United States. Participants emphasized the need for direct talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. Following the conference, on 15 April a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan stated its intention to host the next talks in Kabul, and the Government began preparations for a conference with wider participation, which was to be held on 6 June. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization ministerial meeting was held on 21 April in Astana, during which participants reiterated the Organization's commitment to initiating a political dialogue between parties to the conflict in Afghanistan.

III. Human rights

23. On 27 April, UNAMA released its conflict-related civilian casualty data for the first quarter of 2017. Between 1 January and 31 March, UNAMA documented 2,181 civilian casualties (715 dead and 1,466 injured), representing a 4 per cent decrease compared with the same period in 2016, which comprised a 2 per cent decrease in civilian deaths and a 5 per cent decrease in injuries. UNAMA attributed 62 per cent of civilian casualties to anti-government elements, 21 per cent to pro-government forces and 9 per cent to ground fighting where the perpetrator could not be identified. The majority of the remaining 8 per cent were attributed to the detonation of unattributed unexploded ordnance. Ground engagements caused most civilian casualties (35 per cent), followed by improvised explosive devices (19 per cent) and suicide and complex attacks (17 per cent). Of particular concern were the 24 per cent increase in women casualties (88 dead and 185 injured) and 17 per cent increase in child deaths (210 dead, in addition to 525 injured). Women and child casualties increased mainly from the impact of aerial operations, improvised explosive devices and suicide and complex attacks.

24. As a concrete measure to mitigate civilian casualties from explosive remnants of war, UNAMA welcomed the Government's commitment to ratifying Protocol V to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and urged all parties to commence marking, clearing, removing and destroying explosive remnants of war in areas under their territorial control. UNAMA continued to conduct advocacy meetings with parties to the conflict, including Afghan national security forces, anti-government elements and international military forces, to promote respect for international humanitarian law and take concrete measures to protect civilians from harm.

25. Children continued to suffer disproportionally from the violence. Between 1 January and 31 March, UNAMA verified 384 incidents resulting in 735 child casualties (210 dead and 525 injured), representing a 3 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2016. Children comprised 34 per cent of overall civilian casualties. Ground engagements remained the leading cause of child casualties, accounting for 42 per cent of all child casualties (312 child casualties), followed by incidents related to explosive remnants of war (164 child casualties; 22 per cent) and improvised explosive devices (114 child casualties; 15 per cent) in the first quarter of 2017. A total of 81 per cent of the victims from the unexploded ordnance were children.

26. With respect to the recruitment and use of children by the parties to the conflict, UNAMA verified the recruitment of 13 boys, including 9 by the Taliban, 2 by the Afghan National Police, 1 by the Afghan National Border Police and 1 by the Afghan Local Police. UNAMA verified three incidents of abduction by anti-government elements involving five boys and two incidents of sexual violence against two boys. As at 10 April, 135 children were detained on national security-related charges, including for association with anti-government armed groups, and held in poor conditions in the adult maximum-security detention facility in Parwan Province. Regarding the protection of health and educational facilities and workers, between 1 January and 31 March, 14 incidents affecting education were verified, the same as in the corresponding period for 2016. UNAMA also documented 17 schools used for military purposes. UNAMA notes a reduction in the military use of clinics, recording 1 incident during the reporting period compared with 31 in the same period in 2016. The country task force on monitoring and reporting documented seven incidents of denial of humanitarian access, five attributed to the Taliban and two to undetermined armed groups.

27. On 24 April, UNAMA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released a joint public report on the implementation of the country's national plan on the elimination of torture, covering the period between January 2015 and December 2016. Of the 469 detainees interviewed, 39 per cent gave credible accounts of having experienced torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment during arrest and interrogation in numerous detention facilities run by the National Directorate of Security and the Afghan National Police. The report also documented a pervasive lack of accountability for such practices. Prior to the report's release, the Government withdrew its reservation to the Convention against Torture, and the Cabinet approved in principle the signature of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. Following this, the President ordered the setting up of a national preventive mechanism. On 12 May, the Committee against Torture, in its concluding observations on the second periodic report of Afghanistan, expressed deep concern at the allegations of widespread use of torture and ill-treatment and a culture of impunity. The Committee called upon Afghanistan to make sure that all

allegations were investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially and that alleged perpetrators were prosecuted.

28. Violence against women remained prevalent. The annual report of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, covering the period from March 2016 to March 2017 and released on 8 March, noted an increase of 8.6 per cent in the number of cases of violence against women recorded by its offices across the country. According to the Special Prosecutor on Elimination of Violence against Women, 2,442 cases were registered with prosecution offices across the country, with 149 cases adjudicated. A total of 22 per cent of registered cases were either withdrawn or not followed up by complainants. Commissions on the elimination of harassment against women have been established in 11 provinces. The draft law on the elimination of harassment against women and children was not endorsed by the President, following recommendations by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and civil society organizations to review it.

29. On 2 March, the revised Penal Code was passed by legislative decree after a four-year transparent and inclusive process. The President endorsed it on 4 March, and it is being printed for the Official Gazette. The decree delays the application of the Code for nine months after publication, to allow the security and justice sectors to be trained on and the public to be informed of the revised Code combining crimes in more than 50 special laws enacted since the 1976 Penal Code. The Code incorporates all of the country's substantive treaty obligations, including all mandatory crimes under the United Nations Convention against Corruption, war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, and criminal liability against civilian superiors or military commanders who fail to prevent or punish subordinates who commit these crimes under the Rome Statute and the prohibition of the practice of land-grabbing. It also expands the 1976 definition of the crime of torture to comply with the Convention. The Code provides a progressive definition of rape, being gender-neutral, requiring modern definitions of consent and protecting privacy, dignity and bodily integrity. It furthermore reduces the number of crimes subject to the death penalty by 74 per cent.

30. The Government presented an updated version of the budget ($52 million) proposed for implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. A small working group with representation from both the Government and the international community was formed in March to review the activities and budget with relevant line ministries, with a view to developing a funding mechanism for the plan. On 18 April, the Government launched its national action plan to eliminate early and child marriages for the period 2017-2021.

31. Media workers and civil society actors continued to face intimidation and abuse from anti-government elements. Lack of cooperation from local authorities, including their occasional interference in the work of civil society actors, was also registered during the reporting period. UNAMA recorded four cases of intimidation and killing of civil society actors in Baghlan, Nangarhar and Kabul Provinces. In April, UNAMA supported the relocation to Kabul of one human rights defender under threat. On 7 May, two unknown gunmen on a motorcycle shot and killed a prominent journalist, politician and civil society activist in Pul-e-Khumri city. In Jalalabad city, Nangarhar Province, five media workers, employees of National Radio Television of Afghanistan, were killed in the above-mentioned 17 May attack claimed by ISIL-KP.

IV. Implementation of the Kabul process and coordination of development assistance

32. The Government continued to take steps to address the country's significant economic challenges. The International Monetary Fund and Afghan authorities concluded a first review of the country's Extended Credit Facility on 4 March. The review estimated 2016 growth at 2 per cent, somewhat higher than earlier estimates. An increase to 3 per cent was projected for 2017, driven by favourable agricultural output. Fund staff commended authorities for prudent macroeconomic management and strong progress on structural reforms in challenging circumstances. On 4 March, the country's central bank announced that the Government had substantially addressed technical aspects of an action plan to improve its framework for combating money-laundering and terrorist financing. Representatives of the intergovernmental Financial Action Task Force conducted an on-site visit in Kabul on 11 and 12 April to monitor progress in Afghanistan, which the Task Force considers a high-risk jurisdiction. Recommendations from the visit will inform a future decision as to whether Afghanistan will remain subject to enhanced monitoring.

33. Follow-up to the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, held in October 2016, remained a priority for the Government and donors. The Government continued its efforts to detail its development priorities in 10 National Priority Programmes for 10 sectors, as envisioned in the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework. On 8 March, the Government launched the Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Programme. On 4 April, the Ministries of Economy and Finance outlined to donors plans to incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals into the National Priority Programmes.

34. The Government's budget execution report for the first three and a half months of the Afghan financial year (21 December 2016-8 April 2017) showed no improvement in the percentage of budget spent compared with the same period the previous year (14 per cent in both years). In absolute terms, budget expenditures were lower by $37.3 million. The total allotment or spending authority was, at $2.5 billion, lower by about $731 million. Sectors that saw the greatest reductions were infrastructure and natural resources, social protection, security, and economic governance; expenditures for agriculture, rural rehabilitation and development, education, and health were marginally higher than in the previous year. To improve the execution of the national budget, the Government allotted $1 million to each province to be spent in four sectors (health, education, rural rehabilitation and development, and agriculture). That allocation serves as a pilot for the implementation of the Provincial Budgeting Policy, which was launched on 19 April. Ultimately, the Government would like 40 per cent of its budget to be spent by subnational authorities.

35. On 25 April, UNAMA published its first anti-corruption report, which acknowledges progress made in the Government's anti-corruption efforts, such as the establishment of the High Council on Governance, Justice and Anti-Corruption and the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre, the appointment of a high-level committee to work on a national anti-corruption strategy, the completion of anti-corruption plans by the five largest revenue-generating ministries, progress in improving controls over public financial management, and increased transparency in national procurement processes. The report recommended more effective implementation of key reforms, such as merit-based public sector recruitment, revenue collection and budget execution, and the implementation of stronger oversight and coordination. Since its first trial in November 2016, the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre has adjudicated 14 primary court cases, finding 40 accused guilty, and affirmed 10 cases

on appeal, including those involving high-level officials on charges of bribery, embezzlement and abuse of official authority to obstruct justice. The Centre's prosecutors accepted for investigation 96 cases during the reporting period, many of which they are formally investigating at present.

36. After Afghanistan joined the global Open Government Partnership in December 2016, the Government facilitated three awareness forums in coordination with major civil society networks to promote the role and representation of civil society in six Open Government Partnership working groups, namely on fiscal system openness, legislative openness, access to information, anti-corruption, data openness and natural resources.

37. Further efforts were made to increase the number of women in the Afghan National Police. On 24 April, 245 female police completed a two-month training course and were posted according to their educational levels. The total number of female police officers within the police force remained at approximately 2 per cent. The civilianization of the police also continued. Out of 191 positions earmarked for civilians in the Afghan National Police, 57 positions were filled during the reporting period, resulting in 117 filled to date. In April, the Ministry of Higher Education granted the National Police Academy the status of a university, allowing its cadets to obtain a recognized degree.

V. Humanitarian assistance

38. The ongoing conflict continued to result in significant displacement and protection risks. Between January and mid-May, more than 100,000 individuals were newly internally displaced across the country, with 29 of 34 provinces having recorded some level of displacement. The north, south, east and west of the country were similarly affected, with the provinces of Kunduz, Baghlan, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Nangahar and Faryab all reporting more than 6,000 people displaced. Humanitarian assistance provided to affected populations by the United Nations and non-governmental organizations included emergency food, shelter and non-food items, cash, health services and supplies. The Government's technical working group on land under the Afghanistan Independent Land Authority developed a new legal framework for the identification and provision of suitable land and housing to displaced persons. The framework includes criteria to ensure the suitability of all allocated land and to assess applicants' eligibility.

39. The repatriation programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees resumed on 3 April, after which 24,414 registered Afghan refugees returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan, each receiving $200 per person to support their immediate humanitarian needs.

40. The deportation and spontaneous return of undocumented Afghans from Pakistan continued, with 50,985 arrivals (50,254 spontaneous arrivals and 731 deportees) between 4 March and 20 May, accounting for 83 per cent of the total arrivals from Pakistan in 2017. Since 1 January, the total number of undocumented returnees arriving from Pakistan rose to 60,626, almost double the number that returned in the same period in 2016. Returns from Pakistan continued to be driven by a marked deterioration of protection space. During the reporting period, the International Organization for Migration documented 81,099 arrivals from the Islamic Republic of Iran (20,502 spontaneous arrivals and 60,597 deportees). It assisted 37,344 returnees (73 per cent) from Pakistan and 2,709 (4 per cent) returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran during that period. Between 1 March and 24 May, the International Organization for Migration also assisted 1,095 returnees from Europe (compared with 2,432 for the same period in 2016).

41. The temporary closure of the Torkham and Spin Boldak border crossing points delayed the delivery of essential humanitarian supplies, including medicines, education materials and food assistance, to thousands of beneficiaries. The closures particularly affected the delivery of specialized foods for children under 5, interrupting routine malnutrition treatment for 11,000 children. The continued influx of returning Afghans and their tendency to congregate in Jalalabad and Kabul cities also added to the pressure on existing resources and stretched the capacity of humanitarian partners. Some 20 per cent of the population across Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar Provinces are currently returnees (approximately 500,000 people). As part of long-term efforts to reintegrate returnees and manage internally displaced persons, on 19 March the United Nations, the Government and donors endorsed a comprehensive action plan developed under the auspices of the Policy Framework for Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons to focus on the protection of civilians in conflict-affected areas, the provision of immediate humanitarian assistance, documentation, access to basic services, land allocation and adequate housing.

42. In the first three months of 2017, United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners reached 1.3 million people of the planned 5.7 million. However, constraints on humanitarian access continued to be recorded, with a total of 73 incidents affecting the United Nations and humanitarian partners registered between 1 March and 24 May. The incidents reported included the death of 1 aid worker and the abduction of 11 aid workers and injuries to 2 others. As many as 26 per cent of all incidents recorded were against health workers and health facilities. The number of internally displaced persons located in hard-to-reach areas has continued to grow, constituting 22 per cent (21,827) of the newly displaced in 2017. Addressing the needs of those displaced in highly insecure districts not fully under government control remains immensely challenging. The Taliban displayed some willingness to facilitate access for vaccination campaigns following an outbreak of polio outside Kunduz Province and to engage in dialogue over a response to conflict-displaced people in previously unreached districts of Baghlan Province.

43. As at 21 May, the total funding for humanitarian action in Afghanistan stood at $213 million, of which $115 million was for activities included in the Humanitarian Response Plan.

44. The Mine Action Service and mine action partners continued to provide risk education at encashment and transit centres to ensure that returnees from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran were aware of the presence and danger of landmines, explosive remnants of war and abandoned pressure-plate improvised explosive devices. From 1 March to 30 April, 92,466 returnees received such education. In addition, mine action partners, coordinated by the Mine Action Service and the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination of Afghanistan, declared 18 communities mine-free, which enabled approximately 19,499 individuals across 8.9 km^2 to move freely within their community. However, it is estimated that 3,511 minefields, 309 battlefields and 52 contaminated firing ranges remain, affecting 1,500 communities, in addition to the continued threat from pressure-plate improvised explosive devices and explosive weaponry. The 2017 average monthly incident rate of 87 victims represents a decrease compared with a monthly average of 162 victims recorded in 2016; the vast majority (97.8 per cent) is due to explosive remnants of war and pressure-plate improvised explosive devices rather than landmines.

VI. Counter-narcotics

45. The Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, with technical support from the United Nations, completed the Afghanistan socioeconomic report on opium cultivation for 2016 on 19 May. It found that the estimated value of opiates produced in Afghanistan increased to $3.02 billion in 2016 from $1.56 billion in 2015. At 16 per cent of gross domestic product, the value of opiates was more than two thirds of that of the entire licit agricultural sector of the country. The increase between 2015 and 2016 was attributed to a 43 per cent rise in opium production together with escalating heroin prices.

46. Annual opium poppy eradication efforts began in March. By 23 May, Afghan authorities had eradicated 685 ha in Balkh, Badghis, Herat, Kunar, Kabul, Kandahar, Laghman, Nangarhar and Nimroz Provinces (final eradication figures will be confirmed only upon analysis of satellite imagery). This represented a marked increase in eradication over the 2016 season, when, during the same period, Afghan authorities eradicated only 98 ha of poppy in Badakhshan, Kandahar, Laghman, Nimroz, Sar-e Pul and Takhar Provinces. The increase is attributable to greater emphasis on eradication by the President, intensified efforts by the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, and improved follow-up by the National Security Council, following poor results from governor-led eradication activities in 2016.

47. From 3 March to 24 May, Afghan law enforcement authorities conducted a total of 745 counter-narcotics operations, which led to the seizure of 723 kg of heroin, 34,820 kg of morphine, 15,263 kg of opium, 16 kg of methamphetamine, 9,951 kg of hashish, 21,535 kg of solid precursor chemicals, 32,790 litres of liquid precursor chemicals and 29 K-tablets (synthetic drugs). In addition, 22 heroin processing laboratories were dismantled, and 124 vehicles, 116 weapons, 209 mobile telephones and five radios were seized. During those operations, 829 suspects were arrested and two members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces were killed and two wounded.

48. The Sixth Steering Committee Meeting of the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries was hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan in Astana on 6 April. Senior representatives from the drug control agencies and Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs from the eight Regional Programme countries, as well as donors, international partners and organizations, reviewed the achievements in 2016 and identified priorities for 2017. Participants noted the positive impact of strengthened regional cooperation and joint responses to countering illicit drugs and transnational organized crime.

VII. Mission support

49. The Mission's current vacancy rate is at 10 per cent, compared with the approved vacancy rate of 14 per cent for international staff, and 4 per cent compared with the approved vacancy rate of 6 per cent for national staff. The gender balance stands at 86 per cent male and 14 per cent female for staff in all categories. Despite special measures granted for the Mission to recruit and retain more national female staff, national female staff representation remains at 7 per cent.

50. Between 1 March 2017 and 30 April, UNAMA conducted 178 road and 22 air missions, as well as 508 reverse outreach missions, during which district representatives visited UNAMA field offices.

VIII. Observations

51. On 14 June 2017, I visited Afghanistan to express my solidarity with the Government and people of Afghanistan following the severe terrorist attacks in Kabul on 31 May and 3 June 2017. I left the country deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation, which has caused not only immense human suffering but also significant internal displacement, as I witnessed during a meeting with internally displaced men and women. Despite their dire living conditions, their courage and unwavering commitment to contributing to a prosperous Afghanistan should inspire us all to support them concertedly. Peace remains the foundation for the country's sustainable development.

52. In my meetings with President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah, I stressed the importance of government unity. They expressed their deep concern at the proliferation of different terrorist groups in the Afghan territory and the need for a more concerted international effort to counter terrorism. The recent meeting between President Ghani and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, provides hope for an improvement in bilateral relations, an essential condition for more effective counter-terrorism action.

53. I am encouraged that the Government continued to progress its reform agenda. Efforts to address corruption and increase accountability among senior officials, including in the security apparatus, are particularly welcome. Of note in this regard is the work of the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre, as well as the Government's commitment to eliminating the practice of torture and ill-treatment of conflict-related detainees, to ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to withdrawing its reservations to that Convention. I welcome the Government's revision by legislative decree of the Penal Code.

54. The emerging focus on elections is encouraging; at the same time, it has the potential to create new divisions and exacerbate existing tensions within the political sphere. I welcome the continued commitment of the Government and electoral institutions to holding credible and transparent elections. Initiating the polling centre assessment package will be an important step towards electoral preparations in general and will fulfil one of the key recommendations of the Special Electoral Reform Commission: the preparation of polling centre-based voter lists. It will be crucial to expeditiously make progress on the remaining issues for preparations to start in earnest.

55. While the rate of economic growth has improved somewhat, it has been outpaced by the population growth, including returns. The Government's development priorities are articulated in the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, to which the international community generously pledged its support in Brussels in 2016. I encourage all stakeholders to make efforts to improve the delivery of the Framework. For the United Nations part, I remain committed to helping to realize the vision of delivering as one.

56. The security situation has deteriorated further. The Afghan security forces continued to face an intensifying insurgency. The unrelenting nature of the conflict has affected morale and is a matter that the Government believes must be addressed. The heavy toll of the fighting on civilians, particularly on women and children, reflects the need for all parties to the conflict to take urgent steps to halt the killing and maiming of civilians. I am particularly concerned about the attack in Kabul on 31 May and the subsequent escalation of violence, which further demonstrated the vulnerability of civilians in the conflict. I stress the need for accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The need to

move forward with the implementation of the national civilian casualty prevention and mitigation strategy is crucial in this regard. I note the commitment of the Government to formally ratifying Protocol V to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and call upon the parties to the conflict to remove explosive remnants of war left behind from fighting in areas under their territorial control.

57. The high number of internal displacements remains of concern. In addition, the number of people returning to Afghanistan in 2017 is at higher levels than during the same period in 2016. Besides posing humanitarian challenges in the immediate future, the successful absorption and integration of a large number of returnees will require medium- and long-term development solutions, including access to land and basic services. I commend the Government for its engagement and commitment to determining measures towards addressing this issue. I note that there has been a slight improvement in humanitarian access for the conduct of the polio campaign and encourage all parties to increase access in the interest of the health and welfare of all Afghans.

58. Progress achieved in the implementation of the peace agreement between the Government and Hizb-i Islami (Gulbuddin), including the return of its leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, to Afghanistan and the release of Hizb-i Islami prisoners, demonstrates the Government's willingness to establish peace. Peace must be attained through negotiations and not on the battlefield. For peace to be long-lasting, it must be inclusive, ensure accountability for past abuses and uphold the rights of victims.

59. Regrettably, there has been no discernible progress towards direct peace talks between the Government and the Taliban. A regional environment conducive for an Afghan-led peace process is essential. The Government's initiative to convene the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation conference on 6 June was conceived to that end. It is a testament to the Government's resolve to achieve peace that the conference went ahead despite the horrific levels of violence in the week leading up to it.

60. On regional relations, a series of recent security incidents in Kabul cast a shadow over efforts by the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to improve their relations. The renewed high-level contacts between senior military officials from both countries and the visit by a senior Pakistani parliamentary delegation to Kabul were positive steps towards enhancing confidence at various levels. I urge the two countries to continue this constructive engagement towards improving bilateral relations, which is a key to fostering peace in Afghanistan and beyond.

61. I thank all United Nations personnel in Afghanistan and my Special Representative, Tadamichi Yamamoto, for their continued dedication to fulfilling our commitments in support of the people of Afghanistan under very challenging conditions.

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Agenda item 32
Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 14 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement and first quarterly report (for the period January-March 2017) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the human rights situation in the occupied regions of Georgia (see annex).*

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 32, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kaha **Imnadze**
Permanent Representative

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the identical letters dated 14 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Ministry of Foreign Affairs published the First Quarterly Report for 2017 on the Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Regions of Georgia

For the year 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared the First Quarterly Report on the Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Regions of Georgia. The Report covers the period from January to March 2017 and reveals human rights violations in the occupied territories of Georgia during this period.

The report is prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia in coordination with various governmental agencies. The report is based on open sources of information and aims at providing the international community with periodic information on the human rights situation in Georgia's occupied territories in order to ensure its adequate reaction.

Gross violations of human rights, including inhuman treatment, arbitrary detention, restrictions of freedom of movement and mass infringement on property rights as well as restrictions on the right to receive education in the native language had been reported from the occupied territories in the indicated period. The process of installation of barbed wire fences, other artificial obstacles and banners across the occupation line adds to the gravity of the otherwise tense situation.

It should be emphasized that during the reporting period two more crossing points along the occupation line with the Abkhazian region were closed down. The international community expressed its concern regarding the closure of two additional crossing points and indicated detrimental implications of the above decision for the freedom of movement and therefore for access of basic services such as healthcare and education, especially those living in Gali district of the occupied Abkhazian region. According to the international community, the above decision will likely increase the risk of incidents, especially detentions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is concerned about the human rights situation in the occupied territories of Georgia and appeals to the international community to take immediate and adequate measures for eradication of grave violations of human rights and all forms of ethnic discrimination in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region.

First Quarterly Report (January-March 2017) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Regions of Georgia

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I. Introduction

Aims of the Report and Methodology Applied

1. In January 2015 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia started preparation of quarterly reports aiming at assessing the human rights situation in the occupied regions of Georgia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has already prepared eight such reports: four reports in 2015 and four reports in 2016 (all available at <http://www.mfa.gov.ge/Occupied-Territories.aspx>). This is the first quarterly report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia for the year 2017 covering the period of January-March 2017. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia will further continue the preparation of such reports on a quarterly basis. This reporting exercise aims to contribute to the provision of regular and updated information to the international community, to states as well as to international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on the human rights situation in the occupied regions of Georgia.

2. As for the applied methodology, this reporting exercise consolidates and assesses existing information from various open sources, national and international, on violations of human rights in the occupied regions of Georgia. Due to limitations on its length, the report does not aim to collect/contain information on all cases of violations of human rights in the occupied regions of Georgia; it aims to consolidate and assess only some of the most known examples of violations. The methodology applied does not provide for the conduct of fact-finding visits to the occupied regions of Georgia, nor to the conduct of interviews. Therefore the methodology applied does not enable this reporting exercise to collect and produce new data on the human rights situation in the occupied regions of Georgia.

Responsibility of the Occupying Power for Human Rights Violations

3. The Russian Federation as the occupying power of two regions of Georgia – Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region exercises effective control over these territories. Human rights situation in these territories remains alarming and these two regions of Georgia constitute above all dangerous "black holes" in terms of holding the human rights violators accountable. The Russian Federation as the occupying power has been preventing numerous international organizations from entering Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali Region, Georgia.

4. It should be emphasized that in the reporting period, namely on 24th March 2017, the UN Human Rights Council adopted the resolution on "Cooperation with Georgia".[1] According to the resolution, serious concern is expressed "over the repeated denial of access to international and regional monitors, including United Nations human rights mechanisms, to both Georgian regions [of Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia], by those in control of those regions." In the resolution serious concern was expressed "at the human rights and humanitarian situation in these regions [of Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia] of Georgia". The resolution expressed concern "about reported kidnappings, arbitrary detention, interference with property rights, restrictions on access to education in one's native language, free movement and residence, as well as

[1] "Cooperation with Georgia", Resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council, 24 March 2017, 34th session (27 February-24 March 2017), A/HRC/RES/34/37.

continued discrimination on the ground of ethnic origin in both regions". The resolution further expressed concern "that internally displaced persons and refugees continue to be deprived of the right to return to their homes in a safe and dignified manner". The resolution recognized "in this context the importance of and need for periodic reports of the Office of the High Commissioner for an objective and impartial assessment of the situation of human rights in both Georgian regions, . . . [and called] for immediate access for the Office of the High Commissioner and international and regional human rights mechanisms to Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia". [2] On 24th March 2017, Ms Baroness Anelay, Minister of State of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK, commented the adoption of the Human Rights Council resolution on "Cooperation with Georgia" and stated the following "I also welcome the adoption of the resolution on the situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The human rights situation there is deeply concerning. For too long, international organisations have been denied access by the de facto authorities to these increasingly isolated territories."[3]

5. During the reporting period, namely on 26th January 2017 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted Resolution 2149 (2017) on "the Progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure (September-December 2016) and the periodic review of the honouring of obligations by Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France and Germany". In paragraph 10 of the Resolution, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) expressed its concern about developments and remaining shortcomings in a number of countries and with regard to the Russian Federation it noted the following "the occupation and illegal recognition of independence of Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia, Georgia, in violation of, *inter alia*, international law, the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1) and accession commitments." In paragraph 11 of the Resolution, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) called on "the authorities of the Russian Federation . . . to reverse the ethnic cleansing and the occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and to allow international monitors on the ground".[4]

6. Recently the Secretary General of the Council of Europe published its 15th Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia describing, *inter alia*, human rights situation in Abkhazia, Georgia and Tskhinvali region, Georgia and covering the period between October 2016 and March 2017. Thus part of the Council of Europe's report fully covers the reporting period[5] of the present reporting exercise. It should be noted that the delegation of the secretariat of the Council of Europe carried out a fact-finding visit to Georgia on 20-21 February 2017, however was not allowed to visit Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia.[6] According to the Consolidated Report, "regrettably, since the

[2] "Cooperation with Georgia", Resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council, 24 March 2017, 34th session (27 February-24 March 2017), A/HRC/RES/34/37.
[3] *Baroness Anelay welcomes conclusions of UN Human Rights Council*, Minister of State of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK, 24 March 2017, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/baroness-anelay-welcomes-conclusions-of-un-human-rights-council--4>
[4] "Progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure (September-December 2016) and the periodic review of the honouring of obligations by Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France and Germany." Resolution 2149 (2017), 26 January 2017, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), paragraphs 10.7 and 11.7.
[5] January-March 2017.
[6] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraphs 4 and 5.

previous [consolidated] report, no progress has been made in terms of access of international human rights monitoring mechanisms, including those of the Council of Europe, to Sokhumi and Tskhinvali."[7] The Consolidated report emphasized that "[d]uring the period under review, no progress could be reported as regards the voluntary, safe, dignified and unhindered return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees on the basis of internationally recognised principles."[8] According to the Consolidated Report, "new restrictions on freedom of movement enacted by the *de facto* authorities in Abkhazia and recurrent detentions across both Administrative Boundary Lines (ABLs) continued to trigger serious concerns during the reporting period, also in terms of their negative impact on human rights and safety. . . . It would appear that the new rules will have a particularly worrying effect on schoolchildren and humanitarian crossings. Crossing itinerary in some cases is extended to over 50 km. Moreover, the purported closure of yet another crossing point has been announced in the future, leaving only the Inguri road bridge."[9]

7. During the reporting period, namely on 9th March 2017, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child issued "Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Georgia". In the Concluding observations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted "that Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, remain outside the effective control of the State party, which is a serious obstacle to the implementation of the Convention in those regions. The Committee welcomes the efforts undertaken by the State party to support health and education services in those regions. However, it is concerned about restrictions in those regions to freedom of movement, the access to quality health-care services, the right to education in one's native language, the rights of internally displaced children and continued discrimination on the basis of ethnicity in those regions."[10]

8. During the reporting period, namely on 3rd March 2017, the U.S. Department of State published Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016.[11] According to the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016, "Russian and Abkhaz de facto authorities, on the other hand, limited international organizations' ability to operate in Abkhazia, and Russian and South Ossetian de facto authorities limited international organizations, including humanitarian organizations, regular access to South Ossetia; . . . the most significant human rights problems reported during the year included: arbitrary detentions and deprivation of life by Russian and de facto authorities of Georgian citizens along the administrative boundary line with the country's occupied territories; . . . there were frequent reports of abductions along the administrative boundary lines of both occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; . . . Russian border guards restricted the movement of the local populations."[12]

[7] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 35.
[8] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 60.
[9] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraphs 14 and 43.
[10] *Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Georgia*, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 9 March 2017. Paragraph 4, CRC/C/GEO/CO/4.
[11] *Georgia 2016 Human Rights Report*, U.S. Department of State, published on 3rd March 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265634.pdf>
[12] *Georgia 2016 Human Rights Report*, U.S. Department of State, published on 3rd March 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265634.pdf>, pages 23-24, 1, 2 and 3.

9. During the reporting period, namely on 22nd February 2017, Amnesty International published its Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human Rights.[13] According to Amnesty International, "De facto authorities and Russian forces in the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia continued to restrict movement across the administrative boundary line, detaining dozens of people."[14]

10. During the reporting period, namely on 10th February 2017, the Public Defender of Georgia issued Special Report on the Rights of Women and Children in Conflict-Affected Regions (Review of 2014-2016). According to the report, human rights situation in the occupied territories of Georgia remains alarming in terms of women's rights and rights of children, more specifically human rights violations are at hand due to domestic violence; early marriage; honor killings; child poverty; documentation gap and related violations of rights; issues related to children's safety, illegal detentions and inappropriate and degrading treatment; issues related to education in one's native language and issues related to quality of education; and problems related to rights of children with disabilities. In his Special Report on the Rights of Women and Children in Conflict-Affected Regions (Review of 2014-2016) the Public Defender of Georgia called "the Russian Federation and the de-facto authorities to ensure the unrestricted operation of human rights organizations and international missions in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region."[15]

11. It should be emphasized that during the reporting period, namely on 17th March 2017, INTERPOL issued a red notice warrant on Mr. Rashid Kanji-Ogli.[16] During the reporting period, namely on 10th March 2017, the Kutaisi Court of Appeals increased the sentence to fugitive Mr. Rashid Kanji-Ogli to 14 years.[17] It should be recalled here that in December 2016, Zugdidi District Court found, *in absentia*, fugitive Mr. Rashid Kanji-Ogli guilty of the charges filed against him and sentenced him to deprivation of liberty for a term of 12 years.[18] The case concerns violation of the right to life, namely on 19 May 2016 Mr. Giga Otkhozoria, was murdered by so called "border guards" deployed along the occupation line with Abkhazia. The murder was committed in the village of Khurcha, Zugdidi district, located in the territory controlled by the government of Georgia. After committing the murder Mr. Rashid Kanji-Ogli and his accomplices immediately fled to the occupied territory of Abkhazia. Under the existing circumstances, Mr. Rashid Kanji-Ogli and his accomplices still remain unpunished. The above situation with regard to the violation of the right to life of Mr. Giga Otkhozoria once

[13] *Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human Rights (Georgia 2016/2017)*, published on 22nd February 2017, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/georgia/report-georgia/>

[14] *Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human Rights (Georgia 2016/2017)*, published on 22nd February 2017, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/georgia/report-georgia/>

[15] *Special Report of Public Defender of Georgia on the Rights of Women and Children in Conflict-Affected Regions (Review of 2014-2016)*, 10 February 2017, pages 35-60, available at <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/4/4459.pdf >

[16] *INTERPOL issued warrant on Mr. Rashid Kanji-Ogli, sentenced for murder of Mr. Giga Otkhozoria*, "Fortuna", 17 March 2017, available at < http://fortuna.ge/giga-otkhozorias-mkvlelobistvis-msjavrdebul-rashid-kanjioghlize- interpolis-mier-dzebna-gamockhadda/>

[17] *Kutaisi Court of Appeals Aggravates Punishment of Rashid Kanji-Ogli, Convicted of the murder of Giga Otkhozoria*, Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, 10 March 2017, available at <http://pog.gov.ge/eng/news?info_id=1157>

[18] *Court Finds Rashid Kanji-Ogli, Accused of Giga Otkhozoria's Murder, Guilty*, Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, 28 December 2016, available at <http://pog.gov.ge/eng/news?info_id=1095>

again demonstrates that the occupied territories of Georgia remain "black holes" in terms of holding the violators of human rights accountable. According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, "it was also reported to the delegation that a general insecurity feeling persists among the local population in Khurcha in the aftermath of the incident".[19]

Occupation Line and Installation of Barbed Wire Fences and other Artificial Obstacles

12. The occupation line along the administrative boundary line (ABL) with Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region separates Georgia from its two occupied territories.

13. According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the international community also remains firm in its "opposition to the so-called "borderisation" activities and their impact on the local population, particularly as regards adverse effects on their freedom of movement, livelihood and security perceptions."[20] According to the Consolidated Report, "freedom of movement continues also to be very negatively affected by the ongoing so-called "borderisation" process, which according to information provided by the Georgian central government, has resulted in a 48 km stretch of fencing along the ABL [with the Abkhazian region]. . . Following the so-called "borderisation" phase that resulted in installation of fences and barbed wire stretching over 52 km along the ABL [with the Tskhinvali region], ploughing of furrows and deep ditches along the ABL were pursued during the period under review."[21]

14. According to the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016, published during the reporting period, "Russian "borderization" of the administrative boundary lines of the occupied territories continued during the year [of 2016], separating residents from their communities and undermining their livelihoods. . . The restrictions tightened the Russian "borderization" of both administrative boundary lines and further restricted movement, creating physical barriers and obstructing access to agricultural land, water supplies, and cemeteries."[22]

15. According to Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human Rights, published during the reporting period, "continuing border fencing along the administrative boundary lines of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia had further negative impact on economic and social rights of local residents."[23]

16. On 10th January 2017 an article was published by *CNN* which describes problems created

[19] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 38.
[20] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 53.
[21] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraphs 42 and 51.
[22] *Georgia 2016 Human Rights Report*, U.S. Department of State, published on 3rd March 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265634.pdf>, pages 2 and 24.
[23] *Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human Rights (Georgia 2016/2017)*, published on 22nd February 2017, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/georgia/report-georgia/>

by the occupation line.[24] According to the article, "An EU monitoring mission patrols what is officially known as the Administrative Boundary Line between Georgia and the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In recent years, monitors say, the line has crept forward, swallowing farmland. "Many people don't know in many places where the line is," Kestutis Jankauskas, head of the EU monitoring mission, tells CNN. "It [the border] is being established by practice but it is nothing official. It is [a] very fluid notion of a line." Sometimes the Russian troops use razor wire fencing to mark what they see as the border; at others they post green signs saying "passage forbidden" in Georgian and English. These signs often stand alone, creating confusion for locals, who complain they've been detained and fined for unwittingly crossing the line. This year, the Russians dug two trenches through prime orchard land, claiming the move was for fire protection purposes, but Georgians who traversed the ditches say they were detained. "We don't know where and how far that line can move because it was never recognized; it was never negotiated," explains Jankauskas, adding that it is most likely based on old Soviet General Staff maps from the 1980s"."[25]

New so called "Laws" and New Wave of so called "Passportisation"

17. It should be emphasized that the UN Human Rights Council resolution on "Cooperation with Georgia", adopted during the reporting period, expressed concern about "continued discrimination on the ground of ethnic origin in both regions".[26]

18. It should be recalled that on 1st April 2016, so called "law on legal status of foreign citizens in Abkhazia" and "law on entry and exit of Abkhazia" became operational. A similar document was adopted by the Tskhinvali occupation regime, namely so called "law on legal status of foreigners in the Republic of South Ossetia". Adoption of so called "laws" in many ways target the ethnic Georgian population living in the occupied territories. According to the Special Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Rights of Women and Children in Conflict-Affected Regions (Review of 2014-2016), published during the reporting period, "the majority of the population of Gali as well as some communities in Ochamchire and Tkvarcheli have no access to documents with which to realize their rights, including the rights to movement, private property, and access to education and health, among others."[27]

19. As part of the new wave of so called "passportisation" in the Abkhazian region, the issuance of so called "passports" started in May 2016 and it was continuing during the reporting period.[28] By the end of the reporting period, 12 000 so called "passports" were issued.[29] It is planned to issue

[24] *Returning home to find your house in a 'different country'*, Erin McLaughlin and Sebastian Shukla, CNN, 10 January 2017, available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/09/europe/georgia-south-ossetia-russia-border/>
[25] *Returning home to find your house in a 'different country'*, Erin McLaughlin and Sebastian Shukla, CNN, 10 January 2017, available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/09/europe/georgia-south-ossetia-russia-border/>
[26] "Cooperation with Georgia", Resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council, 24 March 2017, 34th session (27 February-24 March 2017), A/HRC/RES/34/37.
[27] *Special Report of Public Defender of Georgia on the Rights of Women and Children in Conflict-Affected Regions (Review of 2014-2016)*, 10 February 2017, page 51, available at <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/4/4459.pdf>
[28] *Issuance of so called passports in occupied Abkhazia will be renewed from 27 March*, "Pirweli Information Agency", 24 March 2017, available at <http://www.pia.ge/post/110489-okupirebul-afxazetsi-e-w-pasportebis-gacema-27-martidan-ganaxldeba>
[29] *Passport administration renewed issuance of new Abkhaz passports*, "Apsny", 28 March 2017, available at <http://apsny.ru/news/?ID=28310&PAGEN_1=2>

altogether 100 000 so called "passports" by the end of 2017.[30] As for so called "passportisation" in the Tskhinvali region, 3114 so called "passports" were issued during 2016 by the Tskhinvali occupation regime.[31]

20. As a result of a reaction of the international community on the issue of adoption of so called new "laws" and so called "passportisation", decision was made in December 2016 to amend so called "law on legal status of foreign citizens in Abkhazia" and to enable residents of Gali district, holding Georgian citizenship, to obtain "residence permits".[32] More specifically, "in December 2016, the *de facto* Parliament of Abkhazia adopted changes to the *de facto* law on the status of foreign citizens that regulates, among other things, the status and rights of the ethnic Georgian population in the Gali district. . . . The new changes reportedly foresee that the majority of Gali district residents who have Georgian citizenship will be granted "permanent residency" rights, however, it is understood that these changes do not address all outstanding issues. While it is anticipated that one improvement might purportedly concern crossings along the ABL, lack of clarity persists with respect to other rights attached to the permanent resident status, such as property rights."[33] It should be noted that the process of issuance of so called "resident permits" to Gali residents holding Georgian citizenship did not start during the reporting period.[34]

II. Freedom from Torture and Ill-treatment

21. As described in previous quarterly reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the human rights situation in the occupied regions of Georgia, the Russian FSB officers and representatives of the Sokhumi and Tskhinvali occupation regimes regularly take actions which amount to torture and ill-treatment.

22. The practice of torture and ill-treatment in the occupied regions of Georgia remained an issue of concern during the reporting period that was attested by various reports either published in the reporting period or covering the reporting period.

23. According to the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016, published during the reporting period, "[i]ndividuals detained in Russian-occupied South Ossetia and Abkhazia who later returned to Georgian government-controlled territory reported incidents of mistreatment and abuse, including cigarette burns and beatings, while in custody, according to the EUMM. Human rights observers estimated half of the individuals detained by South Ossetian de facto authorities experienced some form of abuse. . . . Prison conditions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia were reported to be chronically substandard".[35]

[30] *Aslan Kobakhia: issuance of new passports will be renewed from 27 March*, "Apsnypress" 12 March 2017, available at <http://www.apsnypress.info/news/aslan-kobakhiya-vydacha-novykh-pasportov-vozobnovitsya-s-27-marta/>

[31] *State security committee declared the number of issued passports*, "Sputnik-Ossetia", 12 March 2017, available at <http://sputnik-ossetia.ru/South_Ossetia/20170312/3829571.html>

[32] *Resident Permits will be given foreign citizens in Gali*, "Apsny", 29 December 2016, available at <http://apsny.ru/news/?ID=26462>

[33] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraphs 45-46.

[34] *Georgians living in Abkhazia are given new status*, "Pirweli Information Agency", 30 March 2017, available at <http://pia.ge/post/111850-afxazetsi-mcxovreb-qartvelebs-axali-statusi-mianiwes>

[35] *Georgia 2016 Human Rights Report*, U.S. Department of State, published on 3rd March 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265634.pdf>, page 6 and 7.

24. According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, covering the reporting period, in the Abkhazian region "[w]hile as a rule those apprehended are released after being shortly detained and paying a "fine", the delegation continued to receive reports about instances of ill-treatment."[36]

25. According to Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human Rights, published during the reporting period, "De facto authorities and Russian forces in the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia continued . . . detaining dozens of people: several detainees complained of torture and other ill-treatment, including beatings, during the prolonged arbitrary detentions."[37]

26. On 23rd February 2017, a 70-year-old local resident was detained in the vicinity of the village of Gugutiantkari, Gori district for so called "illegal border crossing" along the occupation line with the Tskhinvali region. When detained, the local resident was collecting timber in his yard nearby the occupation line. The detainee was transported to the direction of Tskhinvali.[38] The detainee was physically abused when in detention.[39] After his release, due to his severe health conditions, he was immediately placed in Gori hospital.[40] The medical examination suggested that victim suffered a concussion as a result of physical abuse.[41]

27. According to the information disseminated on 3rd March 2017, a resident of the occupied Tskhinvali region was abducted and tortured.[42]

III. Arbitrary Detention

28. It should be emphasized that the UN Human Rights Council resolution on "Cooperation with Georgia", adopted during the reporting period, expressed concern "about reported kidnappings [and] arbitrary detention . . . in both regions".[43]

29. According to the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016, published during the reporting period, "Russian border guards along the

[36] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 44.
[37] *Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human Rights (Georgia 2016/2017)*, published on 22nd February 2017, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/georgia/report-georgia/>
[38] *Nearby the village of Gugutiantkari 70-year-old Amiran Gugutishvili was detained by so called border guards*, "IPN", 25 February 2017, available at <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/konfliqtebi/420542-sofel-gugutianthkarthan-ets-mesazghvreebma-70-tslis-amiran-gugutishvili-daakaves.html?ar=A>
[39] *According to physician, 70-year-old Amiran Gugutishvili, who was released from Tskhinvali detention center, suffers a concussion*, "IPN", 28 February 2017, available at <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/regioni/420865-eqimis-informaciith-ckhinvalis-izolatoridan-gathavisuflebul-70-tslis-amiran-gugutishvils-tvinis-sheryeva-aqvs.html?ar=A>
[40] *Amiran Gugutishvili was released from Tskhinvali detention center*, "Imedi", 28 February 2017, available at <http://imedi.ge/index.php?rec_start=70&rec_start_nav=0&pg=shs&id_pr=10857&id=20>
[41] *According to physician, 70-year-old Amiran Gugutishvili, who was released from Tskhinvali detention center, suffers a concussion*, "IPN", 28 February 2017, available at <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/regioni/420865-eqimis-informaciith-ckhinvalis-izolatoridan-gathavisuflebul-70-tslis-amiran-gugutishvils-tvinis-sheryeva-aqvs.html?ar=A>
[42] *Ossetian Week: difficult happiness of constructor and again Eduard Kokoiti*, "ekhokavkaza", 3 March 2017, available at <https://www.ekhokavkaza.com/a/28349475.html>
[43] "Cooperation with Georgia", Resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council, 24 March 2017, 34th session (27 February-24 March 2017), A/HRC/RES/34/37.

administrative boundary line with Abkhazia typically enforced the boundary-crossing rules imposed by de facto authorities by fining and releasing detained individuals. Along the South Ossetia administrative boundary line, Russian border guards frequently transferred individuals to de facto authorities. . . . There were also reports of arbitrary arrests of ethnic Georgians by the de facto authorities, particularly in the Tskhinvali and Gali regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, respectively. Detainees reported they were not informed of the reason for their arrest or why they were brought before a de facto prosecutor . . . . The EUMM also reported that, on at least one occasion, local South Ossetian border guards crossed into government-controlled territory to detain an individual."[44]

30. According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, "representatives of the Georgian central government expressed fears that the practice of longer-term detentions could be reinstated. In this respect they once again drew the delegation's attention to the case of a Georgian IDP [Mr. Giorgi Giunashvil] from the Gori district that was detained in June 2016 for "illegal border crossing", and sentenced to over 20 years of imprisonment on 3 February 2017 allegedly on crimes relating to "illegal possession of weapons" during the August 2008 conflict."[45] It is particularly alarming that on 3rd February 2017 Mr. Giorgi Giunashvil was sentenced for 20 years of imprisonment in the occupied Tskhinvali region.[46] It should be recalled that on 8 June 2016, Mr. Giorgi Giunashvil, citizen of Georgia was detained by the Russian FSB officers for so called "illegal border crossing" along the occupation line with Tskhinvali region. Initially, the detainee was sentenced two months of imprisonment for so called "illegal border crossing". However, later so called "prosecutor's office" of the Tskhinvali occupation regime initiated "criminal case" against Mr. Giorgi Giunashvil.[47] The government of Georgia considers accusations against Mr. Giorgi Giunashvil to be groundless and fully fabricated therefore calls for his unconditional release.[48]

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[44] *Georgia 2016 Human Rights Report*, U.S. Department of State, published on 3rd March 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265634.pdf>, pages 3-4.

[45] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 56.

[46] *State Security Service of Georgia - State Security Service of Georgia will spare no efforts in order to free Mr Giorgi Giunashvili from illegal detention*, "IPN", 5 February 2017, available at <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/konfliqtebi/417528-susi-sakhelmtsifo-usafrthkhoebis-samsakhuri-giorgi-giunashvilis-ukanono-patimrobidan-dasakhsnelad-yvelafers-gaakethebs.html?ar=A>

[47] *IPRM Meeting held in Ergneti*, State Security Service of Georgia, 19 July 2016, available at <http://ssg.gov.ge/en/news/152/IPRM-Meeting-Held-in-Ergneti>; *10 issues discussed in the framework of Incident Prevention and Reaction Mechanism (IPRM)*, "Kvira.ge", 19 July 2016, available at <http://kvira.ge/%E1%83%98%E1%83%9C%E1%83%AA%E1%83%98%E1%83%93%E1%83%94%E1%83%9C %E1%83%A2%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%9E%E1%83%A0%E1%83%94%E1%83%95%E1%83%94%E1%83%9C%E1%83%AA%E1%83%98% E1%83%98-4/>

[48] *State Security Service of Georgia - State Security Service of Georgia will spare no efforts in order to free Mr Giorgi Giunashvili from illegal detention*, "IPN", 5 February 2017, available at <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/konfliqtebi/417528-susi-sakhelmtsifo-usafrthkhoebis-samsakhuri-giorgi-giunashvilis-ukanono-patimrobidan-dasakhsnelad-yvelafers-gaakethebs.html?ar=A>; *Giorgi Giunashvili was sentenced 20 years of imprisonment by Tskhinvali court*, "IPN", 5 February 2017, available at <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/konfliqtebi/417514-giorgi-giunashvils-ckhinvalis-sasamarthlom-20-tsliani-patimroba-sheufarda.html?ar=A>

State Security Service of Georgia - State Security Service of Georgia will take all available measures in order to free Mr Giorgi Giunashvili from illegal detention, "IPN", 5 February 2017, available at <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/konfliqtebi/417528-susi-sakhelmtsifo-usafrthkhoebis-samsakhuri-giorgi-giunashvilis-ukanono-patimrobidan-dasakhsnelad-yvelafers-gaakethebs.html?ar=A>

31. It is also alarming that during the reporting period a citizen of Georgia - Mr Giorgi Lukava remained in illegal detention in so called Sokhumi prison. Mr Giorgi Lukava was detained in 2012 in the occupied Abkhazian region and was sentenced for life imprisonment. [49] The government of Georgia demands immediate release of Mr Giorgi Lukava from illegal detention.[50]

32. During the reporting period numerous cases were reported on arbitrary detention in the occupied regions of Georgia. Below are only few examples.

33. On 7th January 2017, along the occupation line with Tskhinvali region, the Russian FSB officers abducted a local resident from the adjacent village. The local resident was abducted when approaching local church in order to celebrate Orthodox Christmas Day.[51]

34. On 27th January 2017, two women, both of them residents of Tbilisi, were detained by the Russian FSB officers for so called "illegal border crossing" along the occupation line with the Tskhinvali region.[52]

35. On 16th February 2017, a resident of the town of Anaklia, Zugdidi district, was detained by the Russian FSB officers for so called "illegal border crossing" nearby the occupation line with the Abkhazian region and "criminal charges" were filed against him for the above reason. Later the detainee was freed but was banned from leaving the occupied territory of Abkhazia until "criminal investigation" is pending.[53]

36. On 9th March 2017, three women were detained for so called "illegal border crossing" along the occupation line with Abkhazia. All of them were transported to so called "Sokhumi detention centre" on the territory of the occupied Abkhazia. They were travelling to the occupied territory of Abkhazia in order to attend funeral service of their relative when they were detained.[54]

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[49] *Abkhazian de facto authorities do not confirm the fact of moving Giorgi Lukava from Drand prison*, "Pirweli Information Agency", 15 November 2016, available at <http://pia.ge/post/99592-afxazetis-de-faqto-xelisufleba- giorgi-lukavas-drandis-cixidan-gayvanis-faqts-ar-adasturebs>

[50] *Georgia Raises Three Key Issues at IPRM Meeting in Gali*, "Georgia Today", 23 February 2017, available at <http://georgiatoday.ge/news/5909/Georgia-Raises-Three-Key-Issues-at-IPRM-Meeting-in-Gali>

[51] *25-year-old man was abducted from the village of Jariasheni*, "Info 9", 7 January 2017, available at <http://www.info9.ge/konfliqtebi/163438-sofel-jariashenidan-25-tslis-mamakaci-gaitaces.html?lang=ka-GE >

[52] *Two residents of Tbilisi were detained by Russian Occupants – detention at the occupation line*, "Newposts", 1 February 2017, available at <http://www.newposts.ge/?l=G&id=131238-%E1%83%9D%E1%83%99%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9E%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%A2%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98,%20%E1%83%A2%E1%83%A7%E1%83%95%E1%83%94%E1%83%9D%E1%83%91%E1%83%90%E1%83%A8%E1%83%98>

[53] *Russian Occupants detained one person in Samegrelo for so called illegal border crossing*, "IPN", 17 February October 2017, available at <http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/konfliqtebi/419265-rusma-okupantebma-samegreloshi-ets-sazghvris-ukanonod-gadakvethis-braldebith-erthi-piri-daakaves.html?ar=A>; *A citizen of Georgia was detained in Gali district for illegal state border crossing of republic of Abkhazia*, "Apsnypress", 18 February 2017, available at <http://www.apsnypress.info/news/v-galskom-rayone-zaderzhan-grazhdanin-gruzii-za- nezakonnoe-peresechenie-gosgranitsy-respubliki-abkha/>; *A resident of Anaklia abducted by Russian militaries is freed*, "Livepress", 17 February 2017, available at <http://www.livepress.ge/ka/akhali-ambebi/article/18211-gamgebelirusethissamkhedroebismiermotacebulianakliismkvidrigathavisuflebulia.html>

[54] *Three women were detained along administrative border with Abkhazia*, "Newposts", 14 March 2017, available at <http://www.newposts.ge/?l=G&id=134910-%E1%83%90%E1%83%A4%E1%83%AE%E1%83%90%E1%83%96%E1%83%94%E1%83%97%E1%83%98,%20%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%99%E1%83%90%E1%83%95%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%90>

IV. Freedom of Movement

37. It should be emphasized that the UN Human Rights Council resolution on "Cooperation with Georgia", adopted during the reporting period, expressed concern about restrictions on "free movement and residence . . . in both regions".[55] According to the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016, published during the reporting period, "de facto authorities and Russian occupying forces limited this freedom [of movement] in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. . . . De facto authorities and Russian forces in the occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia also restricted the movement of the local population across the administrative boundaries for medical care, pension services, religious services, and education."[56] In addition, it has been argued that "separation of family members appears to remain a pressing concern for the local population in Akhalgori [in the Tskhinvali region]."[57]

38. According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, "the main critical development over the reporting period [in the Abkhazian region] concerns the closure of two additional crossing points on the ABL, namely Khurcha/Nabakevi and Meore- Otobaia/Orsantia, pursuant to a decision of the *de facto* authorities adopted on 28 December 201[6], which became effective on 5 March 2017."[58] It should be emphasized that the closure of two additional crossing points along the occupation line with Abkhazia was followed by the reaction on behalf of the international community. The international community has expressed concern on the issue of closure of two additional crossing points and indicated negative implications of the above decision for living conditions of local residents and their human rights, including the freedom of movement. Below are listed some examples of that reaction.

39. Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General stated that "we regret the recently announced plans to close two additional crossing points along the Inguri River, Georgia, which will be detrimental to the freedom of movement and overall well-being of the population, including school children, on both sides of the administrative boundary line, especially those living in the Gali District."[59] The UN Resident Coordinator in Georgia stated that "the United Nations are concerned that the announced restrictions will have negative consequences for the humanitarian and development needs of those living in Abkhazia, Georgia. As movement is further restricted, the people of Abkhazia will find it more difficult to access basic services such as healthcare and education and participate in economic activities and social events such as weddings, funerals and public holiday commemorations, as well as family gatherings across the dividing line. Notably, access to education for children who have been crossing to attend schools in their mother tongue will be

[55] "Cooperation with Georgia", Resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council, 24 March 2017, 34th session (27 February-24 March 2017), A/HRC/RES/34/37.
[56] *Georgia 2016 Human Rights Report*, U.S. Department of State, a published on 3rd March 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265634.pdf>, pages 23-24.
[57] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 57.
[58] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 40.
[59] *In response to questions on the announced closure of crossing points along the Ingurui River, the Spokesman has the following to say,* Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General, 27 February 2017, available at <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2017-02-27/note-correspondents-response-questions>

impeded".[60] Spokesperson for the EU stated that "the announced closure of two crossing points along the Administrative Boundary Line of Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia - Nabakevi-Khurcha and Meore Otobaia-Orsantia - which are used daily by hundreds of commuters, will be detrimental to the freedom of movement of the population, including school children, on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Line. It will likely increase the risk of incidents, especially detentions."[61] According to the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) "EUMM expressed serious concern about the announced closure of crossing points, emphasizing the negative impacts such a step would have on the daily lives of local residents who cross the ABL. Special emphasis was put on the challenges to freedom of movement for schoolchildren and for patients crossing for medical care."[62] Spokesperson of the OSCE Chairmanship stated that "we have closely followed the latest developments on the ground. We believe this decision has a number of negative consequences, in particular concerning the freedom of movement of the population on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Line. We therefore call for meaningful dialogue as well as swift and pragmatic solutions, in order to avoid further repercussions for the local population's everyday life."[63] Spokesperson by the NATO stated that "I am concerned by the announced closure of two crossing points along the administrative boundary line of the Abkhazia region of Georgia. Closing these crossing points, which are used daily by hundreds of citizens, will have a negative impact on the situation on the ground and stability in the region. It will restrict freedom of movement, affecting the livelihoods of local residents."[64] The co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for the monitoring of Georgia, visited Georgia from 28 to 30 March 2017 and at the end of their visit "expressed their serious concerns about . . . the closure of crossings of the ABL between Abkhazia and the rest of Georgia."[65] According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, "[i]t is anticipated that the reduction in the number of crossing points will inevitably lead to an increased number of detentions, which continue to occur regularly in case of crossings in "unauthorised" points and/or due to lack of valid documents."[66] Respective statements were made by the United States[67], Lithuania[68] and Japan[69].

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[60] *UN Speaks Out against Inguri River Crossing Closures*, "Georgia Today", 26 January 2017, available at <http://georgiatoday.ge/news/5681/UN-Speaks-Out-against-Inguri-River-Crossing-Closures>

[61] *Statement on the latest developments along the Administrative Boundary Line of Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia*, Spokesperson for the EU, 25 January 2017, available at <https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/21406/statement-latest-developments-along-administrative-boundary-line-georgias-breakaway-region_en>

[62] *EUMM participates in 42nd meeting of Gali IPRM*, EUMM, 25 January 2017, available at <https://www.eumm.eu/en/press_and_public_information/press_releases/5726/?print=yes>

[63] *OSCE Chairmanship concerned about closure of crossing points, stresses negative implications for local population*, Spokesperson of the OSCE Chairmanship, 7 March 2017, available at <http://www.osce.org/cio/303171>

[64] *Statement by the NATO Spokesperson Oana Lungescu on developments along administrative boundary lines in Georgia*, Spokesperson of the NATO, 28 February 2017, available at <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_141873.htm?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=press&utm_campaign=170228-georgia>

[65] *Georgia: rapporteurs welcome progress made and hope the authorities will soon address outstanding issues*, 3 April 2017, available at <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=6579&lang=2 >

[66] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 44.

[67] *United States Deeply Concerned by Closure of Crossing Points in Georgia's Abkhazia Region (March 6)*, Acting Spokesperson, Washington DC, 6 March 2017, available at <https://ge.usembassy.gov/united-states-deeply-concerned-closure-crossing-points-georgias-abkhazia-region/>

[68] *Lithuanian Foreign Ministry's statement on closure of two crossing points in Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, 1 March 2017, available at <http://urm.lt/default/en/news/lithuanian-foreign-ministrys-statement-on-closure-of-two-crossing-points-in-georgias-breakaway-region-of-abkhazia>

40. According to the information disseminated on 23rd January 2017, some ethnic Abkhazians were against the decision on closing down two additional crossing points.[70] It should be emphasized that on 25th January 2017 around 200 ethnic Georgians, all residents of Gali district of the occupied Abkhazian region, held a peaceful rally protesting against the decision on closing down two additional crossing points.[71] Another protest rally of Gali residents against the decision on closing down two additional crossing points was held on 23rd February 2017.[72]

41. According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, "It was reported to the delegation that the so-called "border zone" with a specific regime adjacent to the ABL inside the territory of Abkhazia had been expanded since November 2016. . . . At the same time, the delegation was informed that the *de facto* authorities [in the Tskhinvali region] had eased some of the restrictions in terms of access to the so-called "border zone" adjacent to the ABL, following several protests and criticism by South Ossetia residents who were unable to visit villages situated within the designated area. In particular, on 27 January 2017, the *de facto* government removed special permissions required to enter the so-called "border zone". Other restrictions including the requirement of a permission to carry out livelihood activities within 100 m distance from the ABL reportedly remains in force."[73]

42. It should be emphasized that according to the information disseminated on 18th January 2017, the Sokhumi occupation regime is planning to adopt so called "law" aiming at tightening of sanctions for so called "illegal border crossing". According to the so called "draft law", fines for so called "illegal border crossing" will increase to the amount of 80 to 100 fold of minimum wage of a detainee and detention period can last 15 days in cases of recurrence of "illegal border crossing".[74] According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, "[w]hile as a rule those apprehended are released after being shortly detained and paying a "fine", . . . [a] drastic increase in "fines" – up to ten times higher – for recurrent "violations" is reported to be recently enforced [in the Abkhazian region]."[75]

43. In his Special Report on the Rights of Women and Children in Conflict-Affected Regions

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[69] *Statement of the Embassy of Japan in Georgia on the so-called "referendum" in the Georgia's Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and the closure of so-called crossing points along the occupation line of Abkhazia*, 1 March 2017, available at <http://www.ge.emb-japan.go.jp/files/statement_01.03.2017/statement_01.03.2017_eng.pdf>

[70] *Abkhazians are protesting against closing down crossing points along the administrative boundary line with Abkhazia*, "Pirweli Information Agency", 23 January 2017, available at <http://pia.ge/post/98361-okupirebul-afxazetsi-sesazloa-2-e-w-gamsvebi-punqtebi-arar-daixuros>

[71] *Residents of Gali district came out for protest*, "ekhokavkaza", 25 January 2017, available at <https://www.ekhokavkaza.com/a/28257996.html>; *Abkhazian senior official advises Georgian residents of Gali not to cross redlines*, "Pirweli Information Agency", 27 January 2017, available at <http://pia.ge/post/99437-afxazi- maralcinosnebi-galel-qartvelebs-zrvris-gadakvetas-ar-urceven>

[72] *Georgian residents of Gali held another protest rally*, "Pirweli Information Agency", 24 February 2017, available at <http://pia.ge/post/104260-galelma-qartvelebma-morigi-aqcia-gamartes>

[73] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraphs 43 and 52.

[74] *Occupied Abkhazia is planning to tighten sanctions for so called illegal border crossing*, "Pirweli Information Agency", 18 January 2017, available at <http://pia.ge/post/97770-okupirebuli-afxazeti-e-w-sazrvris-ukanono- gadakvetaze-sanqciebis-gamkacrebas-apirebs>

[75] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 44.

(Review of 2014-2016) the Public Defender of Georgia called for ensuring "that minors no longer be detained and patients be permitted to cross [the occupation line] at any point of the day. Issues related to treatment during detentions and the practice of nighttime release of detainees should be discussed during the negotiations."[76]

V. Right to Property

44. According to the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016, published during the reporting period, "In Abkhazia the de facto legal system prohibits property claims by ethnic Georgians who left Abkhazia before, during, or after the 1992-93 war, thereby depriving IDPs of their property rights in Abkhazia. In a 2010 decree, South Ossetian de facto authorities invalidated all real estate documents issued by the Georgian government between 1991 and 2008 relating to property in the Akhalgori Region. The decree also declared all property in Akhalgori belongs to the de facto authorities until a "citizen's" right to that property is established in accordance with the de facto "law," effectively stripping ethnic Georgians displaced in 2008 of their property rights in the region. . . . De facto authorities in the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia restricted the rights, primarily of ethnic Georgians, to . . . own property."[77]

45. It should be emphasized that during the reporting period, namely on 1st January 2017 so called "law on privatization of republican and municipal property" became operation in occupied Abkhazia.[78] The so called "law" regulates privatization of property of "Republic of Abkhazia" (republican property) and "Administrative-Territorial entities" (municipal property) to natural and legal persons. It is particularly alarming that the above so called "law", *inter alia*, opens illegal prospects for selling the abandoned property of internally displaced persons and refuges from Abkhazian region which were in the possession of "Republic of Abkhazia" (republican property) and "Administrative-Territorial entities" (municipal property) before adoption of this so called "law".[79]

46. It should be emphasized that the UN Human Rights Council resolution on "Cooperation with Georgia", adopted during the reporting period, expressed concern about "interference with property rights . . . . in both regions".[80]

47. According to Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human Rights, "increased fencing along the administrative boundary lines negatively impacted the rights to work, food and adequate standard of living of local residents, after they lost access,

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[76] *Special Report of Public Defender of Georgia on the Rights of Women and Children in Conflict-Affected Regions (Review of 2014-2016)*, 10 February 2017, page 59, available at <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/4/4459.pdf >

[77] *Georgia 2016 Human Rights Report*, U.S. Department of State, published on 3rd March 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265634.pdf>, page 18 and 2.

[78] *"Law on privatization of republican and municipal property"*, paragraph 1, Article 38, available at <https://abh-n.ru/zakon-o-privatizacii-respublikanskoj-i-municipalnoj-sobstvennosti/>

[79] *Program "Abkhazia"*, 26 October 2017, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqJJmTcwxBw>; *Program "Abkhazia"*, 24 January 2016, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSCCxyo7m6w>

[80] "Cooperation with Georgia", Resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council, 24 March 2017, 34th session (27 February-24 March 2017), A/HRC/RES/34/37.

partly or completely, to their orchards, pasture and arable land."[81]

48. According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, during the reporting period, due to the so-called "borderisation", "local residents continued to be unable to access their agricultural and grazing lands in particular during the harvesting period."[82]

49. On 13 March 2017, an article was published in *npr* which describes problems created by the occupation line along the Tskhinvali region.[83] More specifically, according to article "Farmers along the boundary have gone to bed one night thinking their fields and orchards were in Georgia, only to wake up and discover fencing and trenches indicating otherwise. New green signs announcing the presence of a South Ossetian "state border" occasionally pop up in places previously understood to be well within Georgian territory. For now, the boundary is, effectively, wherever Russia says it is. Russia claims it is following old Soviet military maps defining the border of South Ossetia, which was considered a province of sorts in Soviet times. But maps defining that territory are unpublished. "If you have a so-called border in the middle of a village, in the middle of the orchards, it creates huge problems for the local community, for the society," says Tomasz Szablowski, a monitor for the European Union. . . . The village, explains music teacher Zizi Kurmashvili, used to be prosperous — people had huge apple, peach and plum orchards and there was a thriving market. Now, she says, Russia has stolen their land and their water, and people can't make any money."[84]

50. It should be noted that according to the information disseminated on 18th January 2017, the Sokhumi occupation regime is planning to adopt so called "law" providing for the possibility of confiscation of personal belongings in cases of so called "illegal border crossing".[85]

51. According to the information disseminated on 22nd January 2017, the Russian FSB officers searched several citizens of Georgian at so called crossing point along the occupation line with Abkhazia and confiscated their personal mobile phones for the reason that these mobile phones were switched to the Georgian cellular network operators.[86] According to the same source, people wishing to cross the occupation line with Abkhazia are forced to pay additional toll for personal belongings exceeding the weight of 10 kilos.[87]

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[81] *Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human Rights (Georgia 2016/2017),* published on 22nd February 2017, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/georgia/report-georgia/>

[82] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 51.

[83] *Along A Shifting Border, Georgia And Russia Maintain An Uneasy Peace,* Stephanie Joyce, npr, 13 March 2017, available at <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/03/13/519471110/along-a-shifting-border-georgia-and- russia-maintain-an-uneasy-peace>

[84] *Along A Shifting Border, Georgia And Russia Maintain An Uneasy Peace,* Stephanie Joyce, npr, 13 March 2017, available at <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/03/13/519471110/along-a-shifting-border-georgia-and- russia-maintain-an-uneasy-peace>

[85] *Occupied Abkhazia is planning to tighten sanctions for so called illegal border crossing,* "Pirweli Information Agency", 18 January 2017, available at <http://pia.ge/post/97770-okupirebuli-afxazeti-e-w-sazrvris-ukanono-gadakvetaze-sanqciebis-gamkacrebas-apirebs>

[86] *Citizens using so called pedestrian crossing points are fined in occupied Abkhazia*, "Newposts", 22 January 2017, available at <http://www.newposts.ge/?id=130280>

[87] *Citizens using so called pedestrian crossing points are fined in occupied Abkhazia,* "Newposts", 22 January 2017, available at <http://www.newposts.ge/?id=130280>

52. On 2nd March 2017, representative of the Tskhinvali occupation regime declared that "it is necessary to explain to residents of adjacent villages not to cultivate plots of land located at the other side of border line . . . During this year there will be no compromise in terms of allowing illegal harvesting of crops".[88]

VI. Right to Education in the Native Language

53. During the reporting period, the situation with regard to the right to education in the native language in the Gali district of the occupied Abkhazian region remained the same. It should be emphasized that the UN Human Rights Council resolution on "Cooperation with Georgia", adopted during the reporting period, expressed concern about "restrictions on access to education in one's native language".[89]

54. According to 15th Consolidated Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, covering the reporting period, "it is recalled that Russian has replaced Georgian as the language of instruction in all 11 schools in Lower Gali [in the Abkhazian region] in the grades from one to five, following the practice enforced in the Upper Gali where all schools shifted to Russian language curricula since 2008. In these grades, access to the native Georgian language has been reduced to two classes per week of Georgian as a foreign language, which are taught in addition to one class of Georgian literature per week. In discussions with the delegation, representatives of the Georgian central government also expressed concerns that training of Gali teachers has become more difficult in view of stricter controls and that Georgian textbooks provided by the Ministry were confiscated on several occasions. . . . Both Georgian and international interlocutors also pointed to a growing dropout rate believed to be due to the combined effect of reduced access to native language and the growing restrictions on freedom of movement of schoolchildren in spite of the assurances provided in this latter respect by the Abkhaz side in the beginning of the 2016 school year."[90]

55. According to the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016, published during the reporting period, "Ethnic Georgians living in the Gali District of Abkhazia faced problems receiving an education in the Georgian language. According to the EUMM in Georgia, some Gali students seeking to attend school in government-administered territory faced difficulties at the start of the school year crossing the administrative boundary to attend school."[91]

56. According to the Special Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Rights of Women and Children in Conflict-Affected Regions (Review of 2014-2016), published during the reporting period, "restrictions imposed on movement across the Administrative Boundary Line have also affected access to education for those students who cross the Line on a daily basis due to the geographic proximity of schools. Because of these restrictions, the number of such

[88] *Georgian violators of border were expelled from South Ossetia*, "Sputnik-Ossetia", 2 March 2017, available at <http://sputnik-ossetia.ru/South_Ossetia/20170302/3791660.html>
[89] "Cooperation with Georgia", Resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council, 24 March 2017, 34th session (27 February-24 March 2017), A/HRC/RES/34/37.
[90] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraphs 47-48.
[91] *Georgia 2016 Human Rights Report*, U.S. Department of State, published on 3rd March 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265634.pdf>, page 42.

students decreases from year to year. In addition, only those students who are on a special list kept by the Russian border guards are able to cross the Administrative Boundary Line to attend school."[92]

57. It has been argued that the closure of two additional crossing points along the occupation line with Abkhazia "will have a particularly worrying effect on schoolchildren and humanitarian crossings. Crossing itinerary in some cases is extended to over 50 km."[93] And "EUMM expressed serious concern about the announced closure of crossing points, emphasizing the negative impacts such a step would have on the daily lives of local residents who cross the ABL. Special emphasis was put on the challenges to freedom of movement for schoolchildren . . ."[94]

VII. Conclusions

58. It can be concluded that the situation described in the occupied regions of Georgia and examples provided for the reporting period constitute violations of various human rights and freedoms included but not limited to violations of freedom from torture and ill-treatment[95]; arbitrary detention[96]; the right to freedom of movement[97]; the right to property[98]; the right to education in one's native language[99]; and prohibition of discrimination[100].

VIII. Appeal to the International Community

59. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia appeals to the international community, states as well as international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations:

> to call on the Russian Federation to reverse its recognition of independence of the Georgian regions Abkhazia and Tskhinvali and to end the occupation of the Georgian territories;

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[92] *Special Report of Public Defender of Georgia on the Rights of Women and Children in Conflict-Affected Regions (Review of 2014-2016)*, 10 February 2017, page 56, available at <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/4/4459.pdf>

[93] Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (October 2016 – March 2017), 2016, SG/Inf (2017)18, paragraph 42.

[94] *EUMM participates in 42nd meeting of Gali IPRM*, EUMM, 25 January 2017, available at <https://www.eumm.eu/en/press_and_public_information/press_releases/5726/?print=yes>

[95] Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and the OSCE commitments.

[96] Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and relevant provisions of the OSCE commitments.

[97] Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); Article 2, Protocol No. 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and the OSCE freedom of movement commitments.

[98] Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); Article 1, Protocol No. 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and the OSCE commitments.

[99] Article 26 (read in conjunction with Article 2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); Article 2, Protocol No. 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); Article 28 (read in conjunction with paragraph 1 of Article 2) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; and relevant provisions of the OSCE commitments.

[100] Article 14 and Protocol No. 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

to call on the Russian Federation to stop violations of human rights on the occupied territories while exercising effective control;

to continue calling on the Russian Federation to ensure free movement of people and removal of barbed and razor wires and other artificial obstacles and banners along the occupation line; to take additional measures in order to monitor and report on the human rights situation in the occupied regions of Georgia, more specifically, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia appeals to:

i) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to continue efforts with the aim to access the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, pursuant to the HRC Resolution A/HRC/RES/34/37.

ii) the UN Human Rights Council's Special Procedure Mandate holders to take additional measures in order to address and report on the human rights situation in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region of Georgia;

iii) the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe to take additional measures in order to address and report on the human rights situation in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region of Georgia;

iv) the OSCE and its autonomous institutions, namely the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) to find ways for monitoring the human rights situation in Georgia's occupied regions. Such steps could, inter alia, include undertaking a follow-up mission to the occupied regions of Georgia and preparing a report on the status of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the ODIHR/HCNM 2008 Report on "Human Rights in the War Affected Areas following the Conflict in Georgia".

to continue calling on the Russian Federation to allow a) access of the international human rights monitoring mechanisms to the occupied regions of Georgia; b) access of the relevant missions of international organizations (e.g. EUMM), including humanitarian organizations, to the occupied regions of Georgia through legal routes;

to continue and intensify condemning violations of human rights such as the right to life; freedom of movement; freedom from torture and ill-treatment; the right to liberty; the right to property and the right to receive education in the native language in the occupied regions of Georgia.

United Nations S/2017/510

Security Council

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Thirty-third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2333 (2016), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for a final period until 30 March 2018 and requested to be kept informed of the situation in Liberia and the implementation of the Mission's mandate. The present report provides a midterm update on major developments in the country since my predecessor's special report dated 15 November 2016 (S/2016/968).

II. Major developments

A. Political situation and related developments

2. The political landscape in Liberia was dominated by preparations for the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for October 2017. Given the establishment of new political alliances and bargaining among the 22 registered political parties and coalitions, it is unlikely that any presidential candidate will achieve an absolute majority in the first round, requiring a second electoral round in November.

3. On 29 December 2016, the National Elections Commission certified the first opposition alliance, the Coalition for Democratic Change, comprising the Congress for Democratic Change, led by former presidential candidate and current Senator of Montserrado County, George Weah; the National Patriotic Party, led by former First Lady and current Senator of Bong County, Jewel Howard Taylor; and the Liberia People's Democratic Party, led by the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alex Tyler. On 21 January 2017, the coalition named Mr. Weah as its standard-bearer and Ms. Taylor as its vice standard-bearer. Following allegations in the media that the former President, Charles Taylor, had influenced the formation of the new coalition, on 16 March, Mr. Weah reportedly admitted to holding a telephone conversation with Mr. Taylor, who is serving a 50-year sentence after having been found guilty by the Special Court for Sierra Leone of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Sierra Leone.

4. On 23 January, the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, presented her final annual state of the nation address, identifying the fight against corruption and national reconciliation as priorities for the remainder of her tenure. The President

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also called for the passage of land rights and local government legislation and for the holding of a national forum with political stakeholders to agree on peaceful elections in October 2017 and the subsequent transition to a new Government in 2018.

5. On 3 March, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Code of Conduct for Public Officials and Government Employees, which contains provisions requiring that all persons appointed by the President wishing to seek elective office resign two years, or three years for tenured appointees, prior to standing for election. As a consequence, prominent persons wishing to seek office could be disqualified, while current officials engaged in political activities, such as serving on campaign teams, or using government resources to support partisan or political activities could also be affected. There remains a lack of consensus among political parties on the applicability of the Code of Conduct.

6. On 14 March, the President issued Executive Order No. 83, operationalizing the Office of the Ombudsman, which is tasked with overseeing implementation of the Code of Conduct. On 3 April, the President nominated the former Inspector General of Police, Chris Massaquoi, as Chair, in addition to two members, one of whom had to be replaced for not meeting the age criteria. The nominees still await Senate confirmation.

7. In March, allegations emerged in the media that the Chair of the National Elections Commission, Jerome Korkoya, holds citizenship in the United States of America, which is unconstitutional in Liberia. Reactions have been mixed. Some legislators called on Mr. Korkoya to explain allegations of lying under oath during his confirmation hearings, and some political parties called for an adjudication of the matter in court. Mr. Korkoya denied the allegations and called upon his accusers to provide evidence. On 12 May, Mr. Korkoya was sued by a group of citizens and an unregistered political party, alleging a violation of the Aliens and Nationality Law. Several presidential candidates also allegedly hold dual citizenship and could face similar challenges.

8. On 30 May, a group of opposition political parties formally presented to the National Elections Commission a document entitled "the Ganta Resolution", committing to peaceful elections in 2017. The parties had adopted the resolution in September 2016. Additionally, on 31 May and 1 June, the Government of Liberia, supported by UNMIL, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), hosted a national forum facilitated by the Interreligous Council of Liberia, which culminated in the signing of the "Farmington River Declaration" on 4 June by standard-bearers and political leaders of 20 out of 22 registered political parties declaring their commitment to a peaceful electoral process and the transfer of power to a new administration in January 2018.

9. The Governance Commission began work on a bill proposing arrangements for the transition from the current to the next Government, with provisions for regulating the process. Meanwhile, the General Service Agency has started to document and verify all government assets to ensure accountability during the transition.

Electoral process

10. From 1 February to 14 March, the National Elections Commission conducted a nationwide voter registration exercise, which was judged credible by national and international observers despite initial technical glitches that resulted in a one-week extension of the process. On 31 March, the Commission announced the provisional results of the voter registration, which recorded 2.1 million voters, of whom approximately 48 per cent are women. The provisional voter roll should be

exhibited from 12 to 17 June, pending the timely release of funds by the Government.

11. On 9 May, the National Elections Commission issued a writ of elections, indicating that the elections would be held on 10 October 2017. The last day for the nomination of candidates by registered political parties and applications by independent candidates is 11 July. The official campaign period will be from 31 July to 8 October. In preparation for the effective adjudication of election-related disputes, a retreat for judges took place in May, during which the elections law, particularly amendments made in 2014, was discussed.

12. A number of efforts were undertaken to encourage full participation in the democratic process. On 14 February, a women's situation room opened in Monrovia to receive complaints of election-related violence and support the voter registration process. As part of the efforts to enhance women's participation in politics and governance, UNMIL quick-impact projects facilitated training to further empower 100 female political aspirants and campaign managers engaged in grass-roots advocacy. Additionally, in March and April, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a series of stakeholder consultations on youth engagement, bringing together representatives from women and youth organizations, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Elections Commission and the United Nations to discuss prevention of election-related violence, including gender-based electoral violence; increasing trust and cooperation between youth and security providers; and raising awareness of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015). On the basis of those consultations, UNDP developed a project on enhancing youth participation in the 2017 electoral processes, which received $1.8 million in support from the Peacebuilding Fund.

13. In accordance with his good offices and political support mandate, my Special Representative routinely engaged with political stakeholders, encouraging interaction through the Inter-Party Consultative Committee. Additionally, UNMIL, in close collaboration with the Press Union of Liberia, media managers and other partners, worked to encourage incisive yet responsible election-related journalism. The Mission also conducted civic awareness initiatives aimed at preventing electoral violence and enhancing reconciliation, and has provided support for voter education initiatives using various platforms, including radio, roadshows and social media. The Commission also receives support through a UNDP project and a donor-funded basket fund.

14. From 10 to 12 May, my Special Representative consulted with senior government officials in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone in support of national efforts aimed at facilitating an environment conducive to peaceful elections in Liberia. All interlocutors welcomed the spirit of good neighbourliness prevailing among the Mano River Union countries and affirmed their commitment to supporting Liberia during the electoral process. Additionally, the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS have agreed to coordinate closely with respect to messaging throughout the political period and beyond. To enhance the prospect of a free and fair electoral process, several international partners, including the African Union and ECOWAS, plan to deploy election observers to complement national observers.

15. During the reporting period, UNMIL trained 655 senior Liberia National Police officers, including 163 women, in command, control and communications, as well as crisis and incident management. This will support the police's elections operations centre at their headquarters in Monrovia, as well as three regional operations centres. In January, the national police established an election security task force, comprising law enforcement and security agencies, which will engage at

the ministerial and donor levels to conduct joint assessments of security risks and undertake operational planning. UNMIL provides support and strategic guidance to the task force. Additionally, 555 police officers, including 179 women, were trained in community policing and election security. To build public confidence, the national police leadership regularly visited different counties to engage with community stakeholders and held a session in Monrovia with political party representatives on ensuring peaceful campaigns.

National reconciliation, political reforms and governance

16. The Government, with UNMIL support, continued its efforts to advance non-judicial recommendations presented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2009. In December 2016 and January 2017, Palava Hut hearings focused on forgiveness were held in Grand Gedeh and Lofa Counties. A total of 269 war-related victim statements were recorded and 177 cases were amicably resolved. On 8 March, the President dedicated a memorial site honouring Liberians who had died during the civil war on the site of the Paynesville massacre.

17. In April, a national stakeholder review of the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation was conducted by the Liberia Peacebuilding Office, with support from UNMIL. The review revealed that the road map remained relevant and that the Government's political and financial commitment, as well as strengthened coordination among key stakeholders, would be required to achieve national reconciliation. In May, the Liberia Peacebuilding Office and UNMIL disseminated the findings of a social cohesion and reconciliation index measuring progress in advancing reconciliation, and used the results to initiate policy discussions with government officials, civil society and the international community. The index identified areas requiring urgent interventions aimed at strengthening civic trust in government institutions, reducing aggressive tendencies, including sexual and gender-based violence, and enhancing development. The Liberia Peace Ambassador, responsible for developing an agenda for lasting peace in partnership with the National Reconciliation Commission, continued efforts at improving relations between the police, commercial motorcyclists and local communities in Monrovia. He also held conflict resolution meetings in Bomi, Bong, Montserrado and Nimba Counties in April, and in Grand Gedeh, Maryland and River Gee counties in May. UNMIL supported some of these initiatives, including through its quick-impact projects. In May, the Ministry of Internal Affairs hosted peace and reconciliation dialogues for women and youth representatives, county officials and traditional chiefs in Bomi, Gbarpolu, Maryland, Nimba and Sinoe Counties.

18. In March, the President appointed the chairperson and commissioner for policy and planning of the newly established Liberia Land Authority. The President also appointed three other Land Authority commissioners; on 25 May, the Senate confirmed one, while others are still pending. Although land has been identified as a major conflict trigger in Liberia, the land rights bill, recognizing customary land rights, has yet to be enacted. In December, the Legislature decided to hold further consultations with constituents to enhance citizen support and national ownership of the new law, which were initiated in May. My Special Representative, in keeping with his good offices mandate, encouraged the passage of reform legislation, including the pending local government and domestic violence bills.

19. The decentralization of public services continued, with the Government establishing county service centres that provide document-related services, such as the issuance of birth and marriage certificates and driver's licences. Service centres are operational in eight counties and are planned to be available in all 15 counties by the end of 2017.

20. Liberian authorities also undertook efforts to address disputes between communities and concessions. In March, the National Bureau of Concessions, with support from UNMIL and UNDP, launched multi-stakeholder conflict mitigation platforms in four conflict-prone concession sites, specifically Golden Veroleum in Sinoe County; ArcelorMittal in Nimba County; Maryland Oil Palm Plantation/ Cavalla Rubber Corporation in Maryland County; and Sime Darby in Grand Cape Mount County. The platforms, which are funded through assessed contributions, are aimed at establishing sustainable local mechanisms for managing disputes between concession companies and local communities.

21. In November 2016, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission lost a high-profile case relating to the misappropriation of $5.7 million from the sale of 15,000 tons of petroleum products valued at $13 million, which had been donated by the Government of Japan. A former minister of commerce and a former managing director of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company were among those indicted for economic sabotage, misapplication of entrusted property, criminal conspiracy and violation of public procurement procedures and processes. However, the Ministry of Justice advised the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission not to proceed with the cases because of insufficient evidence to secure a prosecution. Between November 2016 and 1 June 2017, 20 audit reports released by the General Auditing Commission implied fraud and/or misappropriation at ministries and other government agencies. As of May 2017, the cases of 11 individuals and 6 institutions had been sent to the Ministry of Justice for further investigation and prosecution.

22. On 22 and 23 February, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection hosted an event to review progress in implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) as part of Global Open Day for Women and Peace. Participants, including those from civil society, observed that transformative leadership could help to overcome structural challenges hindering women's participation in governance, including financial and cultural obstacles.

B. Security situation

23. The security situation remained generally stable, although there were sporadic incidents such as armed robberies, burglaries, presumed ritual killings, land disputes, mob violence and demonstrations. The national police were unable to respond appropriately to all incidents, especially in the remote counties, owing to understaffing and a lack of resources, such as vehicles; hence not all incidents were attended to or reported.

24. Following the discovery of the body of an 18-year-old girl purportedly killed for ritual purposes in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, approximately 500 persons besieged the Liberia National Police station on 6 January, demanding that the suspect be handed over for mob justice. The national police were initially overwhelmed but were reinforced by Police Support Unit officers and contained the situation.

25. On 8 February, a land dispute between the Mandingo and Mano ethnic groups in Sokopa Town, Nimba County, resulted in the killing of one person; another person is missing and presumed dead. Residents of Sokopa Town fled into the bush for several days and only returned to their homes after intervention.

26. On 18 April, a group of Armed Forces of Liberia soldiers attacked national police officers at the police station in Paynesville, on the outskirts of Monrovia, resulting in the injury of two police officers. The police had earlier confiscated a motorcycle from a soldier for violating the curfew. No arrests were made.

27. On 29 April, unarmed forest rangers who were trying to arrest illegal miners and poachers from Sapo National Park, in Sinoe County, came under attack, resulting in the death of one ranger and injuries to five others. Six suspects were arrested.

28. On 20 May, 17 Armed Forces of Liberia soldiers assaulted civilians in Wainsue, Bong County, injuring 15 residents. Five soldiers were arrested and military investigations are ongoing.

Protection of civilians

29. UNMIL completed a review of its protection of civilians strategy in January, which prioritizes prevention through good offices and enhancement of national capacity. In February, a mapping exercise of possible threats to the protection of civilians, such as election-related human rights violations and conflicts over concessions, was completed, and throughout the period under review a series of training exercises was conducted for partners of the United Nations and national partners.

C. Regional situation

30. On 4 June, Liberia hosted the fifty-first session of the Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, during which the President of Togo, Faure Gnassingbé, was elected to succeed Ms. Johnson Sirleaf as Chair of ECOWAS. During Ms. Johnson Sirleaf's tenure, Liberia domesticated several ECOWAS protocols, including on mutual assistance in criminal matters and on establishing the ECOWAS criminal and intelligence bureau. Additionally, the region witnessed progress in the consolidation of democracy, strengthening peace and security, improving financial stability and promoting institutional reform. On regional integration, progress was made in implementing the protocols on free movement of persons and goods, particularly the Common Internal Tariff, the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme and the Economic Partnership Agreement.

31. The Mano River Union organized a meeting in Monrovia on the implementation of its 2013 strategy for cross-border security on 30 November and 1 December 2016. Participants from Member States, ECOWAS and UNMIL met to review achievements; identify challenges and share experiences with the joint border security and confidence-building units; and propose recommendations aimed at harmonizing border control, generating momentum for the implementation of the strategy and enhancing cross-border security cooperation.

32. Following the withdrawal of troops from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and UNMIL formed police from the Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia border in January and February 2017, respectively, inter-mission cooperation activities were subsequently focused on supporting the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in developing their bilateral cooperation. In May, my Special Representative engaged in consultations with Liberia's neighbouring countries on regional cooperation, including discussions on the transnational crime units and the West Africa Coast Initiative.

D. Humanitarian situation

33. Conditions in Côte d'Ivoire remained generally conducive to the voluntary return of Ivorian refugees, although the rate of return of refugees living in Liberia slowed during the first five months of 2017 compared with that of the same period

in 2016. Refugees expressed concerns about security, as well as access to land, basic services and livelihood opportunities in areas of return, in addition to scepticism about the national reconciliation and social cohesion processes in Côte d'Ivoire. To mitigate those concerns, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees organized visits by refugees to villages of return so they could assess available reintegration programmes and security conditions. As at 6 June, Liberia was hosting 15,460 registered Ivorian refugees, including 11,726 living in refugee camps and 3,734 living with host communities, down from the peak of approximately 224,000 refugees in 2011.

34. Lessons learned from the Ebola virus disease outbreak have informed the effort of the Ministry of Health to develop a more resilient health system. Thanks to the national health policy and plan, which is aimed at strengthening national capacity to detect, mitigate and respond to public health threats, there was an effective response to a meningitis outbreak that began in late March. As at 6 June, 31 persons had been infected, 13 of whom had died. The clinical and laboratory results of 13 of the 31 cases were positive for Neisseria meningitidis serotype C, leading to the conclusion that the disease was meningitis. On 17 May, an agreement was reached between the Ministry of Health and the World Bank regarding the development of capacity to diagnose tropical and other communicable diseases in the country within 48 hours of testing.

35. The Government, with support from the World Food Programme, undertook a zero hunger strategic review process that is aimed at assessing the nature of vulnerability in the country and designing a road map for eliminating hunger by 2030, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals. The report was launched by the President on 16 May.

E. Human rights

36. The human rights situation continued to be characterized by the high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence; harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, forcible initiation into secret societies, trial by ordeal and accusations of witchcraft; curtailment of the freedom of speech; and limited national capacity and resources to promote and protect human rights or to meet treaty reporting obligations.

37. Between June 2016 and March 2017, the Government reported 1,404 cases of sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, of which 70 per cent of the victims were girls under 18 years of age. Following the unsuccessful attempt in 2016 to enact a domestic violence bill containing provisions criminalizing female genital mutilation, efforts are under way, as part of the National Human Rights Action Plan, to develop a new bill criminalizing the practice in accordance with the recommendations of the universal periodic review. In November 2016, the United Nations/Government of Liberia joint programme on sexual and gender-based violence entered its third implementation phase, which is scheduled to run until the end of 2020, resources permitting; $3.2 million of the required $36 million has been secured. The programme, which aims to reach all counties, will focus on changing perceptions and attitudes while strengthening systems to address rape, early marriage, domestic violence, harmful traditional practices and their interlinkages with sexual and reproductive rights, HIV and AIDS.

38. In November 2016, Liberia submitted its long-delayed treaty report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which assesses the State's record in implementing the treaty. In December, a platform for civil society organizations focusing on human rights was created, which will enhance

coordination and advocacy. In March 2017, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights was accredited to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, allowing the Commission to access resources, engage with other institutions and more effectively carry out its mandate in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles). The Commission also published a report on the conditions of prisons and prisoners in Liberia in April that underscored human rights violations experienced by prisoners, including limited medical care, overcrowding, prolonged pretrial detention, poor sanitation and inadequate nutrition. In June, the Commission finalized a manual on receiving complaints to guide case review.

F. Economic situation

39. The macroeconomic situation continued to be affected negatively by the global decline in commodity prices and the residual impact of the Ebola outbreak, as demonstrated by real gross domestic product (GDP) growth, which was 8.7 per cent in 2013, 0.7 per cent in 2014, zero in 2015 and 0.5 per cent in 2016. In March 2017, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reduced Liberia's 2016 economic growth estimate to minus 1.2 per cent from its October 2016 estimate of 0.5 per cent. The estimate for 2017 is 3.0 per cent. IMF estimates that Liberia faces a significant shortfall in revenue despite receiving nearly $75 million in direct budget support from donors for the financial year 2016/17.

40. Contraction of the fiscal space, which was also attributed to obligations linked to the security transition, resulted in a per capita decline in GDP of approximately 2.0 per cent. IMF projects economic growth of between 2.5 and 3.0 per cent for 2017/18. The fiscal out-turn for 2016/17 is estimated at $520 million, representing a 6.0 per cent decline against 2015/16. Meanwhile, the ability of Liberia to borrow is limited by the rise in its debt risk rating from "low" to "moderate" in March 2017 because of its high debt to GDP ratio.

41. Inflation remained high, rising from 7.7 per cent in December 2014 to 12.5 per cent in December 2016; inflation eased, however, to 9.9 per cent as of February 2017. The depreciation of the Liberian dollar followed the circulation of millions of new banknotes in the fourth quarter of 2016, which created uncertainty about the economy and was a factor in the decrease in the purchasing power of the Liberian dollar and the corresponding increase in the price of basic commodities.

III. Development of national security and justice capacity

A. National security strategy and architecture

42. Progress was made in developing the national security strategy and architecture. On 19 May, a revised national security strategy aimed at building peace, security, stability and development through the accountable and effective coordination of the security sector was submitted by the National Security Adviser to the members of the National Security Council for approval following a review of the 2008 strategy that has been under way since September 2016. UNMIL is providing advice on the elaboration of an implementation plan, to be completed by the end of June. In line with the statement of mutual commitments between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government, with support from the United Nations and the World Bank, preparations began in April for a public expenditure review of the justice and security sectors, which will be conducted from May 2017

to April 2018. It will inform costing for implementing the justice and security aspects of the Agenda for Transformation, the revised national security strategy and the second phase of the peacebuilding plan conveyed to the Security Council in my letter dated 4 April 2017 (S/2017/282).

43. In April, the Ministry of Justice began a public safety reform initiative entailing a review of the legal framework regulating private security companies and the elaboration of a public safety road map. The Ministry is also drafting, with the support of UNMIL, a public safety law covering the regulation of private security companies, which will be submitted to the Office of the President by the end of June.

44. The National Commission on Small Arms developed regulations for implementing the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act and undertook a series of public sensitization activities. The draft uniform code of military justice remains pending before the Legislature. In the interim, civilian and military officials have received training on the memorandum of understanding signed between the Ministries of Justice and Defence in May 2016 seeking to enhance accountability by subjecting the armed forces to the jurisdiction of the civilian justice system.

45. As part of its efforts to build a gender-responsive security sector architecture, on 27 March, the Ministries of Justice, Defence, and Gender, Children and Social Protection, with support from UNMIL, launched a gender and security sector task force. The task force will coordinate security sector gender focal points to develop joint programmes aimed at enhancing equal participation and opportunities for men and women in the security sector. Subsequently, with UNMIL support, gender offices were established to mainstream gender in security operations in the Ministry of Justice, the Armed Forces of Liberia, the Liberia Immigration Service, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

46. UNMIL also worked to enhance civil society engagement in the security sector reform process, including through a security sector reform think tank established in December 2016 at the University of Liberia. From 20 February to 20 April 2017, civil society organizations sensitized the population to new accountability frameworks within the sector. UNMIL also engaged with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces on designing a project aimed at enhancing the capacity of the next Legislature to provide effective oversight of the security sector; initial assessments to that end were conducted in April and May.

B. Liberia National Police

47. As at 6 June, the strength of the national police stood at 5,127 officers, including 970 women. The majority of the police service, or 3,858 officers, including 748 women, were deployed in Montserrado County as at that date, leaving only 1,284 officers deployed throughout the rest of the country. Forty-one officers are dedicated to addressing accountability, administrative and personnel matters, in support of the decentralization of policing services. In April, 15 senior officers, including five women, graduated from a leadership and management training course in Ghana.

48. The Inspector General of Police, appointed in September 2016, has prioritized leadership, management, professionalism and the delivery of services. However, gaps remain. Policy management and civilian complaints review boards required by the Liberia National Police Act of 2016 are not yet operational. Consequently, in December 2016, 244 officers were promoted in violation of the Act, which requires that the Ministry of Justice's policy management board approve all promotions. The national police, with UNMIL support, continued to sensitize officers with regard to

the Act. Meanwhile, the drafting of six administrative instructions and seven regulations to implement components of the Act was completed in March.

C. Liberia Immigration Service

49. As at 6 June, the strength of the Liberia Immigration Service stood at 2,606 personnel, including 751 women. Of those personnel, 1,914 were deployed to border areas and Roberts International Airport. In April, 15 immigration officers completed a leadership and management course in Ghana, with support from Irish Aid.

50. The Liberia Immigration Service has prioritized the development of regulations and administrative instructions to ensure effective implementation of the Immigration Act. UNMIL provided support by printing and disseminating 1,500 copies of the Act and supporting sensitization programmes for immigration officers. Although the Liberia Immigration Service made progress in drafting regulations and administrative instructions, delays in establishing the policy management and civilian complaints review boards under the immigration law hindered effective management, oversight and accountability.

51. The immigration service has adequate capacity to monitor migration and detect fraudulent travel documents. Border security mechanisms were strengthened with programmatic support provided by UNMIL in line with its mandate, and implemented together with the national police and other law enforcement agencies with border functions. Seventeen of 45 official ports of entry were provided with modern equipment to manage migration and enhance border security. During the reporting period, 140 Liberia Immigration Service officers, including 30 women, were trained in fraudulent document identification, accountability and integrity.

D. Justice and corrections

52. In April, 60 magistrates completed a one-year training course conducted by the judiciary and were subsequently deployed outside of Montserrado County to enhance access to justice.

53. Efforts intensified during the reporting period to introduce plea bargaining in order to alleviate the high level of pretrial detention. As at 1 June, 1,450 persons, or 65 per cent of the prison population, were pretrial detainees. There were nine prison escapes, owing to severe crowding, weak infrastructure and the inability of overstretched officers to ensure control, particularly at corrections facilities outside of Monrovia.

54. On 11 April, the Minister of Justice signed new standard operating procedures and a five-year strategic plan for the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation. After one year of mentoring, in March, UNMIL handed over to the Bureau prisoners' electronic data, which it had previously collected and maintained. Since assuming full responsibility for this task, the Bureau has regularly distributed relevant data to criminal justice institutions. UNMIL assisted in building the Bureau's gender responsiveness in prisons through pilot training organized by the Group of Friends of Corrections that was conducted in early December.

55. Between November and December 2016, UNMIL and the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation provided training for 60 mid-level managers, including 17 women, in incident management and operational capacities to enhance corrections management and accountability through improved internal management and oversight.

E. Armed Forces of Liberia

56. The strength of the armed forces stood at 2,000 personnel as at 6 June. The United States provides training and support for strengthening defence institutions, professional development, maritime security, engineering support and medical readiness. Through this partnership, the armed forces developed its first nationally led officer candidate school, which initiated its first course on 1 May. ECOWAS also provides mentoring for the armed forces. In March, French military instructors conducted a 10-day infantry training exercise and mentoring programme aimed at enhancing combat skills for 50 members of the Armed Forces of Liberia in Zwedru.

57. The army continued to face operational challenges owing in part to insufficient funding, which hampered its ability to sustain operations outside of Montserrado and Margibi Counties. Nonetheless, the army participated in three joint training exercises with the national police and other security agencies during the period under review.

58. The coastguard has 85 personnel and is capable of patrolling up to 150 nautical miles off the coast. On 3 February, a commercial fishing vessel was intercepted while illegally trawling in Liberian waters.

59. Liberia contributes 78 troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). In May, a Liberian peacekeeping soldier was killed during an indirect attack on a MINUSMA camp.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

A. Military component

60. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2333 (2016), the authorized military component of UNMIL comprised 434 personnel as at 28 February 2017, compared with the previous ceiling of 1,240 personnel. The force comprises one infantry company (230); a three-helicopter aviation unit (105 personnel); a level II hospital (69 personnel); and 15 military observers and 15 staff officers. While the force is consolidated in Monrovia, it retains a quick response capability that can deploy up to three platoons anywhere in the country, while military observers regularly conduct patrols throughout the country.

61. The quick reaction force established within UNOCI pursuant to Security Council resolution 2162 (2014) was repatriated from Côte d'Ivoire to Senegal in February, where it is being retrained and equipped prior to its deployment to MINUSMA pursuant to Council resolution 2295 (2016). An advance team of 250 troops will deploy to Mopti, Mali, by the end of July, while it is planned that the remaining 400 members, including the aviation unit, will deploy by the end of August.

B. Police component

62. The police component was reduced to 310 personnel by 28 February from a previous ceiling of 606, pursuant to resolution 2333 (2016). In line with its revised concept of operations for police, UNMIL has consolidated two formed police units in Monrovia that retain the capability to simultaneously deploy up to one platoon from each unit anywhere in the country.

63. The 50 individual police officers, also consolidated in Monrovia, undertake activities through a mobile team concept involving frequent visits to counties, jointly conducted with national counterparts where possible. Priority tasks include supporting the development of the leadership, internal management, professionalization and accountability mechanisms of the national police, with a particular focus on election security and supporting national security agencies to protect civilians in the event of a deterioration that could risk a strategic reversal of stability.

C. Civilian component

64. In the UNMIL budget submission for 2017/18, the abolition of 228 international and national civilian and United Nations Volunteer posts on 1 July 2017 is proposed, leaving 237 international, 421 national and 125 United Nations Volunteer posts as from that date. The timelines for the departure of remaining personnel will be carefully phased to correspond with the conclusion of mandated tasks, including good offices and political support, limited logistical assistance for the electoral process and the transfer of UNMIL responsibilities and assets, including UNMIL Radio, to partners. Determination of the personnel to be retained after 1 July 2017 was based on a comparative review exercise endorsed by the Secretariat that was undertaken in accordance with lessons learned from previous exercises.

D. Support considerations

65. As at 1 November 2016, the Mission operated 27 sites across the country, which have since been reduced in line with the streamlined mandate and the reduction of uniformed personnel. As from 1 July 2017, UNMIL operations will be reduced to 18 sites in Monrovia, field offices in Voinjama and Zwedru and a communications hub in Gbarnga. To continue countrywide transmission of UNMIL Radio as field offices closed, the station partnered with the Liberia Broadcasting System, primarily with shared broadcast towers and facilities.

66. Given the potentially sensitive transition from the current Government to another in January 2018, it is essential that UNMIL remain able to fully implement all aspects of its mandate until 30 March 2018. Consequently, the Mission's liquidation plan entails pre-liquidation in as many areas as possible while substantive activities are under way, with rapid liquidation to be undertaken between 1 April and 30 June 2018. UNMIL has undertaken a thorough assessment of its sites and assets to assist in achieving rapid liquidation. Assets have been grouped and some are being shipped to other peacekeeping missions. From 1 January 2018, most of the remaining UNMIL assets will be beyond their usable life, which will help to expedite asset disposal and site closures. The Mission has engaged closely with the Global Service Centre and UNOCI to ensure that relevant lessons are incorporated in liquidation planning. Additionally, two UNMIL personnel have been deployed to UNOCI to assist with its ongoing liquidation and gain valuable experience for UNMIL liquidation in 2018.

E. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

67. In furtherance of my zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, UNMIL and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection carried out an awareness-raising campaign throughout the country, encouraging community

members to report allegations and to direct victims to sexual and gender-based violence referral pathways that include options for legal, psychosocial, community or protection choices. UNMIL provided mandatory training on sexual violence and other conduct-related issues for 979 United Nations staff and related personnel, as well as 6,287 community members near United Nations premises. Ten allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, covering a period of one year, were reported during the period and are being investigated.

F. Safety and security of personnel

68. No major security incidents against United Nations personnel were recorded during the reporting period, although there were 111 road traffic accidents involving United Nations vehicles. Efforts are under way to improve road safety, including through training for UNMIL personnel in defensive driving. Three robberies, 11 burglaries, three thefts and one minor fire were recorded at the residences of United Nations personnel, while street crime targeting United Nations personnel included one armed robbery, five unarmed robberies, two thefts and four assaults. Seven United Nations personnel died during the reporting period, one in a traffic accident and six of natural causes.

69. With respect to United Nations facilities, assets and operations, 23 incidents were recorded, including four burglaries, one theft, two cases of attempted theft, seven minor fires, four peaceful protests by local actors, four intrusion-related incidents and one instance of damage caused by rain.

V. Transition of the United Nations engagement in Liberia

70. Given that the United Nations engagement in Liberia is transforming, UNMIL and the Government of Liberia are working closely together to develop clear messaging aimed at assuaging public anxiety about the Mission's closure. Those messages underscore the fact that Liberian security services have significantly increased their capacity to maintain peace, as demonstrated by their effectiveness over the 11 months since the end of the security transition. The messages also stress that the United Nations and other partners will remain engaged in Liberia after the closure of the peacekeeping operation. Information campaigns conducted throughout the country, including through UNMIL Radio, have utilized varied approaches with local actors and traditional communicators.

71. In March, UNMIL and the United Nations country team established a joint transition task force. The objectives of the task force are twofold: first, to support Liberia's political transition, specifically the transfer of political and administrative power to a new Government in January 2018; and second, to support the United Nations transition with a view to ensuring the continuation of peace consolidation priorities currently supported by UNMIL. These efforts are closely associated with those of the Governance Commission, as described in paragraph 9 above. Also, by my letter dated 4 April 2017 (S/2017/282), I transmitted to the Security Council the peacebuilding plan requested by the Council in resolution 2333 (2016) that was jointly developed by the Government of Liberia and the United Nations, in consultation with bilateral, regional and other partners, including the World Bank and the European Union, which provides a framework for sustaining peace in the context of the transitions under way in Liberia. The Government has initiated a process for developing its implementation plan.

72. A capacity mapping exercise finalized by the United Nations country team in May, which detailed the requirements for a strategy to sustain peace in Liberia,

identified considerable gaps in financial and material resources in addition to human and logistical capacities that the country team will face after UNMIL is withdrawn. Pursuant to resolution 2333 (2016), UNMIL worked closely with the country team to identify strategies for addressing its gaps in capacities, including with a view to accelerating preparations for the Mission's drawdown and closure. In that regard, identified UNMIL assets will be written off and transferred in accordance with relevant financial rules and regulations in order to support the operations of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Additionally, as recommended in the special report of the Secretary-General of 15 November 2016 (S/2016/968), the country team and the Government are supporting the implementation of tasks mandated to UNMIL, with funding from the Mission's budget. Among the areas of intervention are community policing; border management, security and stabilization; election-related dispute resolution; and combating impunity for sexual and gender-based violence.

73. UNMIL also engaged closely with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel to initiate the process of handing over relevant activities, including those related to support for the Mano River Union. In addition, UNMIL has begun discussions with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) about establishing a stand-alone OHCHR office as part of the United Nations country team after the withdrawal of UNMIL. With regard to UNMIL Radio, a range of possible options are under consideration to facilitate its sustainable transfer to an independent entity after the Mission's withdrawal, pursuant to resolution 2333 (2016). This includes its possible conversion to a regional radio station under the auspices of ECOWAS, a proposal supported by the President of Liberia.

74. Efforts are also under way to enhance engagement with regional partners. In April, my Special Representative visited Abuja to consult with ECOWAS and Nigerian officials on a range of issues, including measures to be taken jointly in order to prevent conflict during the electoral period and democratic transition, and by regional partners after the withdrawal of the peacekeeping operation. Specific possible interventions under consideration could be finalized on a bilateral basis with the Liberian authorities.

VI. Observations

75. Ensuring credible presidential and legislative elections in October 2017 and a peaceful transfer of power in January 2018 are monumental milestones that will consolidate Liberia's transformation to sustained peace and democratic order. The citizens of Liberia have played an essential role in the country's positive journey since the end of the civil war in 2003, and I wish to pay tribute to their efforts. However, sustaining peace will require the people and Government of Liberia to remain committed to nurturing that hard-won peace, throughout the electoral process and beyond.

76. I commend the stated commitment of all stakeholders to ensure that the elections in October will be free, fair and transparent and that any dispute will be resolved peacefully through established mechanisms in accordance with the law. I urge all Liberian citizens to actively participate in the electoral process in a constructive manner. I particularly welcome public commitments made by political party leaders to violence-free elections and acceptance of the electoral outcomes. I also welcome the outcome of the ECOWAS Summit of 4 June, specifically the signing of the "Farmington River Declaration" by 20 out of 22 registered political parties in Liberia in the presence of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government,

committing to violence-free elections in October and a peaceful transition to a new Government. Additionally, given the importance of a free and professional press to a democratic society, I am pleased by the commitment media managers have made to ensure inclusive and professional coverage of the electoral process.

77. Liberia made history by being the first country in Africa to democratically elect a female President, and the role of the women of Liberia in bringing peace through grass-roots activism has been well documented. Given the importance of women's leadership in sustaining peace, I call upon all political actors to demonstrate the transformational leadership required to overcome the legal, structural, cultural and other obstacles to women's political participation. Liberia's future also requires the development of a new generation of political leaders. I underscore in that regard the importance of including youth, who comprise the majority of the population, in the democratic process.

78. The National Elections Commission has demonstrated through numerous electoral processes its professionalism and impartiality, learning and applying lessons with each process. I stress the continued need for efforts aimed at ensuring transparency and a level playing field, which are essential for sustaining public confidence in the credibility of the electoral process. In that regard, I welcome the Commission's continued engagement with political parties through the Inter-Party Consultative Committee, and underscore the importance of this mechanism for dialogue and the resolution of contentious issues. I also note the important role of the newly established Office of the Ombudsman, the work of which should begin without further delay. While I recognize the constrained fiscal space, I urge the Legislature to prioritize the passage of the national budget and the Government to disburse funding expeditiously to the National Elections Commission.

79. Just beyond the electoral exercise will be a significant transition: the handover of power from President Johnson Sirleaf to a democratically elected successor in January 2018, which is unprecedented in the modern history of Liberia. The United Nations, working in close cooperation with the African Union, ECOWAS and other counterparts, will remain closely engaged in supporting that historic transition. I am pleased to note that preparations aimed at facilitating the preservation and transfer of government assets, information and documentation to the next Government is already under way. The success of this process will be of critical importance to the integrity of the democratic process and the stability of the incoming Government. I also wish to commend the Government of Liberia for its full engagement on the development of a peacebuilding plan, as requested by the Security Council, and call upon all international partners to generously support the implementation of this plan.

80. The people of Liberia have long recognized that sustaining the hard-won peace will require political, institutional and other reforms aimed at overcoming the societal and structural inequities that were at the root of the long conflict. While I recognize that some governance improvements are advancing, including the decentralization of public services, it is concerning that protracted delays continue to undermine efforts to advance deeper, and essential, structural reforms. In that regard, I call upon all legislators to prioritize the passage of proposed legislation that would have a positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of their constituents, in particular the pending land rights, local government and domestic violence bills, and to give attention to the constitutional amendments proposed by the Government.

81. Sustaining peace in Liberia will also require that real impetus be given to the essential process of national reconciliation, which has not gained adequate momentum since the issuance of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2009. The people and Government of Liberia must demonstrate

courage by taking forward those important recommendations, including those aimed at addressing continued impunity for human rights abuses and violations committed during the civil war through criminal accountability. Priority must be given to restorative justice, truth and reconciliation.

82. It is concerning that efforts to root out the scourge of corruption have been ineffective, contributing to a dangerous cynicism that undermines trust and reconciliation. It is essential that all actors responsible for prosecuting and adjudicating corruption cases, particularly those involving prominent personalities, demonstrate through action that there will no longer be impunity for bribery, misappropriation of public funds, malfeasance and other corrupt acts.

83. I am very encouraged by the performance of the Liberian security services, which have proactively demonstrated their capacity to maintain stability and protect the population independently since the conclusion of the security transition from UNMIL in June 2016. Efforts under way to put in place a robust and well-coordinated electoral security plan aimed at responding effectively to any incident of public disorder are commendable and must be redoubled. I welcome the increasing focus of the Liberia National Police on effective community policing and crowd control throughout the electoral process, efforts that should be expanded. Additionally, police capacity should be reinforced in both strategic and tactical areas, particularly with regard to improving the managerial structure and command and control capacities. Building public trust, an essential aspect of maintaining public order, will require that effective mechanisms be in place to address any incident of indiscipline by security personnel entrusted with protecting the population. The credibility of the rule of law also requires greater attention to the courts and corrections system, including efforts to address the persistently high incidence of pretrial detention. I call upon the judiciary and all those concerned with the administration of justice to ensure that justice is administered effectively and in a fair and prompt manner.

84. I am concerned about the human rights situation in Liberia, especially continued impunity for sexual and gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. I therefore welcome the recent launch of a dedicated hotline to report violence against children, and call upon the Government to provide the resources needed to ensure its sustainability. I also welcome the Liberia National Police hotline dedicated to reporting sexual and gender-based violence. It is essential that these tools contribute to the effective prosecution of perpetrators.

85. As UNMIL draws down, and with the closure of UNOCI on 30 June 2017 imminent, it is even more essential that the Liberian and Ivorian authorities coordinate closely to ensure stability along their shared border and to facilitate an environment conducive to the return of Ivorian refugees remaining in Liberia. Important cooperation mechanisms exist in the context of the Mano River Union. I call upon all Member States to demonstrate ownership and commitment by supporting the implementation of the joint cross-border security and confidence-building units.

86. Simultaneous with the important political period under way in Liberia, the United Nations engagement in the country is undergoing a major transformation, with UNMIL entering the final phase of its deployment. While the peacekeeping operation has been a constant and robust presence in the country for more than 13 years, it has never been the only partner on which Liberia could rely. I therefore welcome discussions under way aimed at reaffirming regional, bilateral, multilateral and other support for Liberia during these last months of the UNMIL deployment and beyond. While my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel and the United Nations country team will continue to accompany Liberia after the

withdrawal of UNMIL, I call upon donors to generously support efforts to fill identified gaps, including for the establishment of a stand-alone OHCHR office.

87. I would like to thank my Special Representative for Liberia, Farid Zarif, for his excellent and steadfast leadership. I also extend my sincere gratitude to all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel, troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and other regional organizations, multilateral and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable role in restoring peace to Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and police strength as at 1 June 2017

	Military component					
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police*
Bangladesh	–	–	–	–		
Benin	1	–	–	1		
Bhutan	–	–	–	–		
China	–	1	–	1	140	
Egypt	2	–	–	2		
Finland	–	–	–	–		
Gambia	1	–	–	1		
Germany	–	–	–	–		
Ghana	1	1	–	2		
India	–	–	–	–		
Kenya	–	–	–	–		
Nepal	1	–	–	1		
Nigeria	3	4	230	237	120	
Norway	–	–	–	–		
Pakistan	1	3	69	73		
Poland	–	–	–	–		
Republic of Korea	–	–	–	–		
Romania	–	–	–	–		
Russian Federation	1	–	–	1		
Senegal	–	1	–	1		
Serbia	1	–	–	1		
Sweden	–	–	–	–		
Togo	–	1	–	1		
Turkey	–	–	–	–		
Uganda	–	–	–	–		
Ukraine	1	2	105	108		
United States of America	–	2	–	2		
Zambia	1	–	–	1		
Total	**14**	**15**	**404**	**433**	**260**	

UNMIL
Deployment
June 2017
GUINEA
SIERRA LEONE
LIBERIA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
Monrovia
Robertsport
Bensonville
Kakata
Buchanan
Greenville
Harper
Zwedru (Tchien)
Fish Town
Barclayville
Sanniquellie
Voinjama
Ganta
Tapita
Zleh Town
Towns Town
Kanga
Hartford
Edina
Trade Town
Yepa Town
Timbo
Cestos City
Bolowhoin
Chayee
Gbarpu
Pennoken
Shabko
Jakakichn
Tiehnipo
Tuhake
Kopo
Baime
Nana Kru
Sinestown
Grand Cess
Pibo
Nemeke
Tabou
Kodeke
Nyanke
Ybuke (Kaobli)
Gbao
Duobo
Tawake
Bopolu
Tubmanburg
Mecca
Klay
Gbarnga
Sidida
Botota
Careysburg
Harbel
Marshall
FRG UNMIL
NIGERIA
UKRAINE
PAKISTAN
UNMO TEAM 2
UNPOL
FPU CHINA
FPU NIGERIA
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June 2017
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Security Council

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Letter dated 15 June 2017 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to Ambassador Elbio Rosselli's letter of 2 May 2017, I have the honour to confirm that the members of the Security Council have agreed to send a mission to Haiti from 22 to 24 June 2017. They have also agreed on the terms of reference of the mission (see annex).

I have the honour to lead this mission in my capacity as Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations and as President of the Security Council for the month of June 2017.

Following consultations with the members, it has been agreed that the composition of the mission will be as follows:

Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorentty Soliz (Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Ambassador Wu Haitao (China)
Mr. Ihab Moustafa Awad Moustafa (Egypt)
Ambassador Mahlet Hailu Guadey (Ethiopia)
Ms. Anne Gueguen (France)
Ambassador Inigo Lambertini (Italy)
Ambassador Yasuhisa Kawamura (Japan)
Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan)
Mr. Evgeny T. Zagaynov (Russian Federation)
Ambassador Gorgui Ciss (Senegal)
Mr. Joakim Vaverka (Sweden)
Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko (Ukraine)
Ambassador Stephen Hickey (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Ms. Amy Noel Tachco (United States of America)
Mr. José Luis Rivas (Uruguay)

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sacha Sergio **Llorentty Soliz**
President of the Security Council

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Annex to the letter dated 15 June 2017 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General

Terms of reference of the Security Council Mission to Haiti

Security Council Mission to Haiti, led by the Plurinational State of Bolivia during its chairmanship of the Council

1. The Security Council will carry out its Mission to Haiti in the context of its resolution 2350 (2017).

2. The objectives of the mission are as follows:

(a) Reaffirm the support of the Security Council to the Government and people of Haiti to strengthen their country and institutions, in order to contribute to the stability and development of Haiti;

(b) Conduct a review of the implementation of resolution 2350 (2017), focusing on the successful conclusion and closure of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the smooth transition between MINUSTAH and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), including the orderly and progressive drawdown of the military component;

(c) Identify on the ground the necessary requirements for the successful implementation of the mandate of MINUJUSTH.

3. Upon returning to New York, the Mission intends to orally report back to the Council on the closure of MINUSTAH and the transition towards MINUJUSTH.

4. The mission will seek to accomplish these objectives by holding meetings with the following key stakeholders:

- President of Haiti
- Prime Minister of Haiti
- Main government officials of Haiti
- Superior Council of the National Police
- Conseil supérieur du pouvoir judiciaire
- Ombudsman
- Bureau of the National Assembly (Presidents of the Senate and Deputies)
- United Nations country team in Haiti
- Main authorities of MINUSTAH
- Troop-contributing countries/police-contributing countries
- Other actors (private sector): civil society, entrepreneurial sector, core group (diplomatic corps)

United Nations A/71/940–S/2017/512

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
21 June 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 61
Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 16 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the Malaga Youth Declaration (see annex), adopted at the 2017 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Youth Conference, held on 25 and 26 May 2017 in Malaga, Spain, in the context of the implementation of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Román **Oyarzun**

17-10341 (E) 280617

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Annex to the letter dated 16 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Malaga Youth Declaration

We, young people from the participating States and partners for cooperation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), gathered in Mollina, Malaga, on the occasion of the 2017 OSCE Youth Conference, are convinced that youth mainstreaming brings added value to OSCE in achieving the goals and the purpose of the Organization and that young people can support participating States in implementing OSCE commitments in all three dimensions of OSCE, as recognized by the Ministerial Council of OSCE in its Declaration on Youth, adopted in Basel, and its Declaration on Youth and Security, adopted in Belgrade.

As a result of our discussions, we have made recommendations in the following areas:

(a) Youth, peace and security;

(b) Youth and social media: countering radicalization and extremism;

(c) Cybersecurity and the economic impact of malware;

(d) Youth environmental platforms: creating a sustainable world;

(e) Promoting tolerance and countering disinformation online;

(f) Youth political participation.

Recommendations

1. OSCE should develop a cross-cutting OSCE youth policy and establish an inclusive and representative OSCE youth consultative body with the authority to select an OSCE special representative for youth and security, supported by the secretariat and funded through the unified budget.

2. Engage a broad alliance of stakeholders, including formal and non-formal education providers, families, communities and at-risk youths, in preventing and countering violent extremism leading to radicalization and terrorism, through joint online efforts, such as information-sharing platforms, social media campaigns and educational workshops in local high schools, featuring emotionally engaging positive counter-narratives.

3. In order to address the lack of knowledge across society of cybersecurity issues, such as networks, personal data protection and evolving norms, States should support programming and other educational mechanisms to promote computer literacy and online security awareness, starting in primary school, with a special focus on young girls and women.

4. Identify the reasons for cyberthreats, promote social inclusion and integrity and reach out to vulnerable youth groups, creating opportunities and increasing motivation among young people to use their potential in a constructive manner. State and private entities should organize "hackathons" and international events with young professionals.

5. We, as young people, need tools to raise awareness among young people of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. We call upon the participating States to support youth initiatives that demonstrate a real impact on the environment

and contribute to strengthening security. In addition, we encourage the creation of platforms and networks to share knowledge, build capacities and exchange experience and new ideas among youth organizations and other stakeholders, by establishing clear mechanisms for youth engagement in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Sustainable Development Goals at all levels.

6. In order to enable young people to contribute to the transition to the green economy, we call upon the participating States, partners for cooperation and executive structures of OSCE to support youth campaigns on the benefits of the green economy and sustainable, innovative and greener initiatives. We believe that keeping young people active in research and development will provide a platform for quality dialogue and lead to more opportunities for sustainable employment through the creation of green jobs.

7. We encourage participating States and their formal and non-formal education systems to promote civic education and democratic values in order to strengthen the capacity of young people to critically engage with media and the digital world.

8. We call upon all media and digital actors to acknowledge their social responsibility and influence and their resulting accountability, by increasing the visibility of stories about young people and their opinions and views, with particular attention to vulnerable groups.

9. Support OSCE participating States in promoting youth impact assessment mechanisms in national legislation.

10. Establish structural mechanisms for the meaningful and inclusive participation of young women and men from participating States and partners for cooperation, such as an annual OSCE youth forum and regional youth platforms to build capacity and foster mutual understanding through dialogue.

Follow-up

We, the participants in the Youth Forum, call upon OSCE to consider the recommendations above containing the perspectives of our generation and to ensure follow-up on their inclusion and implementation in the work of the Organization.

We ask the Spanish Chair of the Group of Friends of Youth and Security to bring these recommendations to the attention of the executive structures, participating States and partners for cooperation of OSCE.

United Nations A/ES-10/755–S/2017/513

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
19 June 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 16 June 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Throughout the month of June, countries, civil society and individuals around the world have joined in solidarity with the Palestinian people as they solemnly marked 50 years of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip since 1967. As we reflect on this sombre anniversary and the devastating impact of this brutal foreign occupation on the Palestinian people and their land, it is beyond regrettable that a political horizon to end this grave, massive injustice remains absent as Israel, the occupying Power, shows no indication or intention of halting its illegal policies and practices, and on the contrary only persists with its entrenchment of the occupation and its subjugation of the Palestinian civilian population.

While Israel's impunity and intransigence continue to douse hopes for a peaceful solution, eroding every single day the prospects of achieving the two-State solution on the 1967 lines, it also continues to propel the deterioration of the situation on the ground and to compound the never-ending list of countless human rights violations, including war crimes, against the Palestinian people. Since our previous letter regarding the situation in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, the criminal actions by Israeli occupying forces have continued, no doubt bolstered by this culture of impunity and lawlessness insisted on by the Israeli Government, even in times of peace process, and the global failure to hold Israel accountable for any of its violations against the Palestinian people for over a half-century.

As with its constant oppression of the Palestinian people, the occupying Power has been unrelenting in its colonial settlement enterprise, whether announcing "intentions" to build or actually building more Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land, in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The signs are blatant and innumerable that the Israeli Government has no intention whatsoever of ceasing its settlement activities — despite the unequivocal demand by the Security Council in resolution 2334 (2016) for a complete and immediate cessation of all settlement

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activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem — and no intention to foster the conditions necessary to open a political horizon to salvage the two-State solution.

In this regard, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared the previous week, "Alongside our desire to reach an agreement with our Palestinian neighbours, we will continue to protect the settlement enterprise and strengthen it." He went on to state, "We are doing this responsibly and with discretion." One does not need to read between the lines to know that Israel constantly contradicts itself with such statements, as with its illegal policies and practices, since settlements will clearly never lead to peace. On the contrary, such illegal and destructive practices are the main obstacle to achieving a peaceful settlement and constitute the biggest threat to the two-State solution. There is no such thing as "responsible" settlement building, and any attempt to legalize the illegal must never be tolerated and must be roundly condemned.

At the same time, since our previous letter, Israel, the occupying Power has persisted with all other human rights violations against the Palestinian people, including its arrest and detention raids throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Palestinian civilians continue to be detained daily, with young men and boys fiercely targeted by the Israeli occupying forces, who routinely assault, humiliate and abuse Palestinian civilians that they have arbitrarily arrested or detained.

In this connection, it is also necessary to draw your attention to the dire health conditions of many of the prisoners who participated in the 40-day hunger strike that ended on 27 May and was initiated to highlight the critical plight of the over 6,500 Palestinian prisoners and detainees being held by the occupying Power and to appeal for respect for their basic human rights. It should be recalled that Israel responded to this peaceful, non-violent protest with harsh punitive measures, adding to their suffering. Many of the hunger strikers continue to suffer serious health consequences, including physical deterioration such as brain damage and vision problems. We thus urgently call for attention to be given to any Palestinian prisoner in need of medical assistance. At the same time, we continue to call for an end to all types of abuse and to inhumane treatment of Palestinians in Israeli captivity, while also reiterating our calls for the release of all Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

In addition to the above, the Palestinian people living in the Gaza Strip continue to suffer tremendously from the dire humanitarian crisis caused by Israel's suffocating and immoral decade-long blockade, an act of gross collective punishment. Moreover, the occupying forces continue to attack Palestinians living there, including the killing of Ayed Khamis Jumaa (age 35), who was shot in the head with live ammunition during clashes between Palestinian civilians and Israeli forces in northern Gaza. Six other Palestinians were also injured by Israeli fire. Israeli occupying forces also continue to fire at Palestinian fishermen off the coast of the Gaza Strip, endangering their lives and placing them in a constant state of fear.

As all of this is happening, unabated and with grave impact on the Palestinian people and their hopes for an end to this injustice, Israel also continues its hostile attempts to silence anybody who reveals the truth about this abhorrent situation. One most recent example is the call by Israel to the United Nations to terminate the tenure of the Humanitarian Coordinator of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Robert Piper, or else threatening to revoke his residency permit. The cause of such punitive threats? Clearly it is in response to Mr. Piper faithfully carrying out his duties and reporting honestly on what he is witnessing on the ground. This type of arrogant behaviour has become a characteristic of Israeli policy, which is to threaten and intimidate anyone who dares speak the facts and the truth about the illegal and inhumane policies and practices of its brutal occupation, and it must not be tolerated.

After more than 50 years of occupation and nearly 70 years since Al-Nakba, we will not relent in our calls and efforts for international law to be upheld and the relevant resolutions to be implemented towards the realization of justice and the fulfilment of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including to independence in their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace, which we have for so long sought and which is so urgently needed for both regional and international peace and security. These objectives have become more urgent, not less, with the passage of decades and accumulation of crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, and we call upon the international community to finally commit itself to bringing an end to the occupation and this injustice. Condemning 50 years of settlements, 50 years of war crimes, 50 years of occupation is no longer enough. It is time for genuine and concerted action.

Before concluding, below we share just some of the many crimes perpetrated by the occupying Power in the period since our previous letter to you.

26 May 2017

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least seven Palestinians and sealed a supermarket during multiple raids across the West Bank.
- A group of Israeli settlers attacked Palestinian commercial shops under the protection of occupying forces in central Al-Khalil (Hebron).

29 May 2017

- Occupying forces detained at least 18 Palestinians, mostly in overnight raids across the West Bank.

30 May 2017

- Israeli occupying forces opened fire at a Palestinian man (age 25) as he was walking near the beach in the northern Gaza Strip, injuring him.

2 June 2017

- Israeli occupying forces detained four Palestinian youths in Janin and Qalqilyah.
- A Palestinian girl, Nouf Infi'at (age 16), succumbed to wounds she sustained on 1 June after being shot by Israeli forces in Ya'bad, south of Janin.

3 June 2017

- Israeli navy occupying forces opened fire at Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast.

4 June 2017

- Occupying forces destroyed eight coal production facilities and confiscated hundreds of tons of wood used for manufacturing charcoal, outside the town of Ya'bad.

7 June 2017

- Israeli settlers set up 13 tents and caravans on Palestinian privately owned land near the village of Dayr Istiya, near the town of Salfit.

- Occupying forces assaulted two Palestinians and seized a tractor in Qusrah village, south of Nablus.

8 June 2017

- Occupying forces detained at least 11 Palestinians across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

9 June 2017

- Israeli settlers vandalized several Palestinian-owned cars in Bayt Safafa, south of East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces shot dead Ayed Khamis Jumaa (age 35) and injured at least six other persons in the Gaza Strip.

11 June 2017

- Israeli occupying forces detained 14 Palestinians during overnight and early raids across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces opened fire, attacking Palestinian farmers and fishermen in the Gaza Strip.

12 June 2017

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 15 Palestinians during overnight raids across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces served military orders to a Palestinian family informing it of the occupation's intentions to demolish their home in the Nuway'imah area, north of Jericho, citing bogus pretexts such as "building without a permit".

This letter is in follow-up to our 613 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 24 May 2017 (A/ES-10/754-S/2017/447), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

United Nations S/2017/514

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 June 2017
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 16 June 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime in the Syrian Arab Republic for the period 14-16 June 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) P. **Ilichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 16 June 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime (14 June 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire in Damascus governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported three violations: two in Dar'a governorate and one in Damascus governorate.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusrah Front and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out five humanitarian operations in Aleppo city, delivering 1.1 tons of food parcels to the local population.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo was 1.1 tons.

Humanitarian aid was provided to 600 people.

In total, 1,344 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, 47 ceasefire agreements have been signed with the following populated areas in Idbli governorate: Suruj, Hafiyah, Umm Miyal, Awja, Khuraybah, Qan, Abu Tuhayjah, Burtuqalah, A'jaz, Sayyadi, Juhman, Sinjar, Khiyarah, Mutawassitah, Kafraya, Khirbat 'Arabah, Abu Sharji, Kuraysantah, Qarati, Bi'r Ja'far, Harran, Ruffah, Abu Habbah, Tall Maraq, Abu Umar, Umm al-Tinah, Fuhayl, Umm al-Rajim, Duwaybidah, Umm Rafful, Mashhad, Kalayat, Luwaybidah, Maksar al-Tahtani, Maksar al-Fawqani, Tall Amarah, Jubb al-Ghasab, Nabaz al-Qibli, Hawa, Shaykh Barakah, Duwadiyah, Harmala, Suray'a, Qasr al-Abyad, Tall Awja, Rabi'at Musa and Nabaz al-Shamali.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,619.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 219.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime (15 June 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported nine incidents of gunfire in the following governorates: four in Damascus, three in Dar'a and two in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported eight violations in the following governorates: three in Dar'a, three in Hama, one in Damascus and one in Homs.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusrah Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out five humanitarian operations: in Aleppo city, delivering 3.7 tons of food parcels to the local population; and in Wadi Qindil, Ladhiqiyah governorate, delivering 1.1 tons of food parcels to the local population.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo was 4.8 tons.

Humanitarian aid was provided to 1,505 people.

In total, 1,349 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

During humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours, Russian field medics have provided medical assistance to 346 people.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, no ceasefire regime agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged at 1,619.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 219.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime (16 June 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 11 incidents of gunfire in the following governorates: 5 in Damascus, 3 in Hama, 2 in Ladhiqiyah and 1 in Dar'a.

The Turkish representative office has reported 10 violations in the following governorates: 5 in Damascus, 2 in Dar'a, 2 in Homs and 1 in Hama.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusrah Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out the six humanitarian operations: five in Aleppo city, delivering 1.25 tons of food parcels to the local population; and one in Homs city, delivering 2.2 tons of food parcels to the local population.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo was 3.45 tons.

Humanitarian aid was provided to 1,070 people.

In total, 1,355 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

During humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours, Russian field medics have provided medical assistance to 112 people.

One United Nations humanitarian operation was carried out: the Russian airline Abakan Air parachuted a total of 21 tons of humanitarian cargo (food products) near to the city of Dayr-al-Zawr.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, seven ceasefire agreements have been signed: with Qasr Wardan, Musaytibah, Anbaz and Rasm al-Anz in Hama governorate; and with Qasr al-Shawi, Ma'qar al-Qibli and Hazim in Idlib governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,626.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs, Idlib and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 219.

United Nations S/2017/515

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 June 2017

Original: English

Third report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)

I. Introduction

1. On 20 July 2015, the Security Council, in its resolution 2231 (2015), endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action concluded by China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

2. At the start of my tenure as Secretary-General, I am encouraged by the continued implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. I hope that ongoing commitments to the Plan can provide an example of the benefits of diplomacy, which leads to the reduction of tensions among States. I encourage all States to act in accordance with and support this historic agreement, and avoid provocative actions and speech.

3. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continues to verify and monitor the implementation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. On 15 January 2017, IAEA announced that it had verified that the Islamic Republic of Iran had removed, within one year from Implementation Day, as required by the Plan, all excess centrifuges and infrastructure from the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant and transferred them to storage at the Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant under IAEA continuous monitoring.

4. In March and June 2017, the Agency issued quarterly reports on its verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in the light of resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2017/234 and S/2017/502). The Agency reported that it has been verifying and monitoring the implementation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of its nuclear-related commitments since Implementation Day and that the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to provisionally apply the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement, pending its entry into force, and the transparency measures contained in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The Agency also reported that it continues to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material and that its evaluation regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities for the Islamic Republic of Iran remained ongoing.

5. I welcome the recent reco·nmitment by the participants in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in Vienna on 25 April 2017, to the full and effective implementation of the Plan. I call upon them to continue to work together in good faith and reciprocity to ensure that all participants benefit from the Plan. In

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resolution 2231 (2015), the Security Council called upon all Member States, regional organizations and international organizations to take such actions as may be appropriate to support the implementation of the Plan. It is in the interest of the international community, writ large, that this achievement of multilateral diplomacy endures transitions and implementation challenges, cementing our collective commitment to diplomacy and dialogue.

6. The present report, the third on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), provides an assessment of the implementation of the resolution, including findings and recommendations, since the second report of the Secretary-General, issued on 30 December 2016 (S/2016/1136). Consistent with the first and second reports, the focus of the present report is on the provisions set forth in annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), which include restrictions applicable to nuclear-related transfers, ballistic missile-related transfers and arms-related transfers to or from the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as asset freeze and travel ban provisions.

II. Key findings and recommendations

7. Since 16 January 2016, my predecessor and I have not received any report on the supply, sale, transfer or export to the Islamic Republic of Iran of nuclear or dual-use items, materials, equipment, goods or technology undertaken contrary to paragraph 2 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

8. Since 30 December 2016, 10 additional proposals to participate in or permit activities with the Islamic Republic of Iran for nuclear or non-nuclear civilian end uses were submitted to the Security Council for approval through the procurement channel. Five of the proposals have been approved by the Council.

9. On 29 January 2017, the Islamic Republic of Iran launched a Khorramshahr medium-range ballistic missile. As in the case of the ballistic missile launches by the Islamic Republic of Iran in March 2016 (see S/2016/649, paras. 17-22), there was no consensus in the Security Council on how this particular launch related to resolution 2231 (2015). I call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to avoid such ballistic missile launches, which have the potential to increase tensions. I appeal to all Member States to redouble their efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.

10. The Secretariat has examined the weapons and analysed the information related to the arms shipment seized by the French frigate *Provence* in the northern Indian Ocean in March 2016 (see S/2016/1136, para. 27). On the basis of the information analysed, the Secretariat is confident that the weapons seized are of Iranian origin and were shipped from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

11. Iranian entities, including the Defence Industries Organisation, which is on the list maintained pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015), once again participated in the International Defence Exhibition in Iraq. The present report also provides information on additional travel by Major General Qasem Soleimani. I reiterate my call upon all Member States to fully implement their obligations in relation to resolution 2231 (2015), including those regarding the travel ban and asset freeze of individuals and entities on the list maintained pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015).

III. Implementation of nuclear-related provisions

12. In resolution 2231 (2015), the Security Council endorsed the establishment of a dedicated procurement channel, under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, to review proposals by States seeking to engage in certain transfers of nuclear or dual-

use goods, technology and/or related services to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Through this channel, the Council reviews and decides on recommendations from the Joint Commission established under the Plan regarding proposals by States to participate in or permit activities set out in paragraph 2 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

13. Since 30 December 2016, 10 new proposals to participate in or permit the activities set forth in paragraph 2 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) were submitted to the Security Council, bringing to 16 the total number of proposals submitted since Implementation Day for approval through the procurement channel. At the time of reporting, 10 proposals were approved by the Council, two were withdrawn by the proposing States and four are currently under review by the Joint Commission.

14. In addition, the Security Council received six new notifications pursuant to paragraph 2 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) for certain nuclear-related activities that do not require approval but do require a notification to the Security Council or to both the Security Council and the Joint Commission.

IV. Implementation of ballistic missile-related provisions

A. Restrictions on ballistic missile-related activities by the Islamic Republic of Iran

15. In paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), the Security Council called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology.

16. On 1 February 2017, the Minister of Defence of the Islamic Republic of Iran confirmed that the Islamic Republic of Iran had flight-tested a ballistic missile, while stressing that the launch did not contradict the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or resolution 2231 (2015).[1] In the same period, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterated that the Islamic Republic of Iran's ballistic missiles "have not been designed to be capable of carrying a nuclear weapons" and therefore were not in violation of resolution 2231 (2015).[2]

17. On 7 February 2017, I received a joint letter from France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States on the launch by the Islamic Republic of Iran of a Khorramshahr medium-range ballistic missile on 29 January 2017. Those States underscored that the phrase "ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons" in paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) included all Missile Technology Control Regime Category I systems, defined as those capable of delivering at least a 500 kg payload to a range of at least 300 km, which are inherently capable of delivering nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Those States considered that since the Khorramshahr is designed to be capable of delivering a 500 kg payload to a range of at least 300 km, the launch of the missile constituted an "activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons" and "[a] launch using such ballistic missile technology", which the Islamic Republic of Iran has been called upon not to undertake pursuant to paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015). In the letter it was also stated that the launch was destabilizing and provocative and that it had been conducted in defiance of resolution 2231 (2015).

[1] Fars News Agency, "Iran Confirms Missile Test", 1 February 2017.
[2] Mehr News Agency, "Iran not to hesitate in reinforcing defense capabilities", 31 January 2017.

18. In identical letters dated 10 February 2017 addressed to me and the President of the Security Council (S/2017/123), the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations expressed Israel's strong condemnation of the ballistic missile test conducted by the Islamic Republic of Iran on 29 January 2017. He indicated that the Khorramshahr medium-range missile had travelled a distance of 1,000 km. He also stated that the Khorramshahr is a Missile Technology Control Regime Category I missile "capable of delivering a nuclear payload of 500 kilograms for a range of over 300 kilometres". He concluded that the test constituted "yet another flagrant violation" of resolution 2231 (2015) and that "the development of surface-to-surface missiles with nuclear warhead capability reveals the true intentions of Iran not to comply with resolution 2231 (2015)".

19. In a letter dated 9 March 2017 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2017/205), the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations stated that the above-mentioned letter from the Permanent Representative of Israel was "replete with baseless speculations about the name, range, performance and technical characteristics of a missile". He also stated that "Iran's indigenous missiles are an indivisible part of its conventional deterrence and defensive capabilities" and underlined that "no universal norm, treaty or agreement bans or limits the development and testing of missiles equipped with conventional capabilities for self-defence requirements". He further stated that "nothing in Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) prohibits Iran's conventional missile activities" and concluded that "in this context, any demand for the cessation of Iran's legitimate and conventional defence activities is groundless and unwarranted".

20. The Security Council discussed the Iranian ballistic missile launch on 31 January and 2 March 2017. There was no consensus among Council members on how that particular launch related to resolution 2231 (2015). The third six-month report of the Facilitator on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) provides the details of Council deliberations on this issue.[5]

B. Restrictions on ballistic missile-related transfers or activities with the Islamic Republic of Iran

21. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), provided that they have obtained prior approval from the Security Council, on a case-by-case basis, all States may participate in and permit the supply, sale or transfer to or from the Islamic Republic of Iran of certain ballistic missile-related items, materials, equipment, goods and technology,[6] the provision of various services or assistance, and the acquisition by the Islamic Republic of Iran of an interest in certain commercial ballistic missile-related activities. At the time of reporting, no proposal had been submitted to the Council pursuant to that paragraph.

22. In his identical letters dated 10 February 2017, the Permanent Representative of Israel stated that the Khorramshahr missile originated from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which had also conducted several tests of the same kind of missile in 2016. He added that "this serves as additional proof of the cooperation between Iran and DPRK on the development and transfer of surface-to-surface missile technologies". In his letter dated 9 March 2017, the Permanent

[5] Document symbol not yet assigned.

[6] The items, materials, equipment, goods and technology concerned are those set out in the Missile Technology Control Regime list (S/2015/546, annex) and any items, materials, equipment, goods and technology that the State determines could contribute to the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that the aforementioned letter from the Permanent Representative of Israel contained "misleading information, lies and allegations".

23. In a letter dated 7 June 2017, the United States brought to the attention of the Secretariat information on a shipment of ballistic missile-related items that, in its assessment, was undertaken contrary to resolution 2231 (2015). The letter stated that "in October 2016, an Iranian firm that supports the ballistic missile program received a consignment of controlled carbon fiber". The letter concluded that "because this shipment did not receive advance, case-by-case approval as specified in Annex B of UN Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), this export to Iran's ballistic missile program was a violation of that resolution".

24. The Secretariat has not been able to independently corroborate these reports. I will provide a further update on these issues should additional information become available to the Secretariat.

V. Implementation of arms-related provisions

A. Restrictions on arms-related transfers to the Islamic Republic of Iran

25. As stipulated in paragraph 5 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), all States, provided that they have obtained prior approval from the Security Council on a case-by-case basis, may participate in and permit the supply, sale or transfer to the Islamic Republic of Iran of any battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large-calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles or missile systems, as defined for the purpose of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, or related materiel, including spare parts. Prior approval from the Council is also required for the provision to the Islamic Republic of Iran of technical training, financial resources or services, advice, other services or assistance related to the supply, sale, transfer, manufacture, maintenance or use of those arms and related materiel.

26. On 20 January 2017, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine announced the discovery of 17 boxes containing missile system components and aircraft parts without accompanying documents in a cargo plane in Kyiv bound for the Islamic Republic of Iran. In its interactions with the Secretariat, the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations confirmed that competent Ukrainian authorities had prevented an unauthorized shipment of suspected military items on 19 January 2017, including possible component parts of the "Fagot" anti-tank missile system, had initiated criminal proceedings on 30 January 2017 and were in the process of determining whether the confiscated items were covered by paragraph 5 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015). On 13 June 2017, during consultations in Kyiv, Ukrainian authorities shared additional information on the unauthorized shipment with the Secretariat, including on the status of the judicial proceedings and classification process of the confiscated items. I intend to report to the Security Council in due course as additional information becomes available.

27. In a letter dated 1 June 2017, the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations confirmed to the Secretariat that on 27 April 2017, in the port of Zonguldak, Turkish authorities confiscated component parts of 9K111 Fagot and 9K113 Konkurs anti-tank guided missiles concealed in a truck that was transiting from Ukraine to the Islamic Republic of Iran on board a vessel named *CENK Y*. According to Turkish authorities, the Iranian truck driver stated that he had obtained the items from another Iranian citizen in Kyiv, to be transported to the Islamic

Republic of Iran. A criminal investigation has been launched by the Office of the Prosecutor of Zonguldak Province. On 9 June 2017, during consultations in Ankara, Turkish authorities confirmed to the Secretariat that judicial proceedings were ongoing. I will report to the Security Council accordingly as additional information becomes available, including on whether the confiscated items are covered by paragraph 5 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

28. With regard to the provision of services or assistance related to the maintenance of arms and related materiel specified in paragraph 5 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), open-source information indicated that services had been provided to a warship[4] of the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the port of Durban, South Africa, in late 2016.[5] In a letter dated 16 May 2017, the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations confirmed to the Secretariat that "following a distress call from the Iranian vessel *Bushehr*, the vessel was allowed to enter Durban port on 15 November 2016" and "departed on 22 January 2017 following emergency repairs on its hull". He also indicated that "its accompanying vessel, the *Alvand*, requested access to the Durban Port on 19 November 2016 to support the *Bushehr* and departed on 10 January 2017". The Permanent Representative stressed that "the assistance provided to the *Bushehr* related to emergency repairs undertaken in accordance with South Africa's international obligations to assist a vessel in distress and was not related to 'the supply, sale, transfer, manufacture, maintenance, or use of arms and related materiel' as provided for in paragraph 5 of Annex B of UN Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)".

B. Restrictions on arms-related transfers from the Islamic Republic of Iran

29. In paragraph 6 (b) of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), the Security Council decided that all States were to take the necessary measures to prevent, except as decided otherwise by the Council in advance on a case-by-case basis, the supply, sale or transfer of arms or related materiel from the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the time of reporting, no proposal had been submitted to the Council pursuant to that paragraph.

30. In July 2016, France brought to the attention of my predecessor information on the seizure of an arms shipment on board a stateless dhow on 20 March 2016 in the northern Indian Ocean. In its assessment, the arms shipment had originated in the Islamic Republic of Iran and was likely bound for Somalia or Yemen. In January 2017, France provided to the Secretariat additional information regarding the dhow, including its course prior to its interception, documents found on board and the identity of some of the crew members. The Secretariat notes that the dhow was stopped by the frigate *Provence* at a point on the most direct and economical route between its home port, Konarak, Islamic Republic of Iran, and its destination off the coast of Somalia, as declared by the crew master, an Iranian individual.

[4] Warships are defined in the Register of Conventional Arms as "vessels or submarines armed and equipped for military use with a standard displacement of 500 metric tons or above, and those with a standard displacement of less than 500 metric tons, equipped for launching missiles with a range of at least 25 kilometres or torpedoes with similar range". It is the understanding of the Secretariat that the Iranian vessel involved had a displacement of more than 500 metric tons and was armed and equipped for military use.

[5] Jeremy Binnie, "Iranian navy flotilla stuck in South Africa", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 19 January 2017.

31. In March 2017, French authorities granted full access to the Secretariat to examine the assault rifles, sniper rifles, light machine guns and anti-tank missiles seized. The Secretariat was able to independently ascertain that the 2,000 assault rifles and 64 sniper rifles were in new condition. Although lacking country or factory marking, the weapons corresponded to known features of Iranian-manufactured weapons. The 2,000 assault rifles have characteristics identical to Iranian-produced KLS-7.62 mm,[7] an assault rifle type AK-47. The 64 sniper rifles have characteristics identical to those of the Iranian-produced SVD sniper rifle. Furthermore, the Secretariat confirmed with the foreign manufacturer of the optical sights fitting the sniper rifles that they were produced as recently as 2015 and were sold to an Iranian company.

32. My predecessor and I received several letters regarding the arms shipments seized by Australia and the United States in early 2016, information that was already provided to the Security Council in the first and second reports on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). They include identical letters dated 15 May 2017 addressed to me and the President of the Security Council from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations (S/2017/427), as well as a note verbale dated 27 October 2016 from the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations (A/71/581). The latter brought to the attention of my predecessor a letter dated 18 October 2016 addressed to the President of the General Assembly from the Permanent Representatives of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen (ibid., annex).

33. In a letter dated 18 February 2017 addressed to me, the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations stated that "multiple reports of similar interceptions documented the seizure of considerable quantities of weapons and ammunition" that, in the assessment of Yemen, included "Iranian-made anti-tank missiles, assault rifles, Dragunov sniper rifles, AK-47s, spare barrels, mortar tubes, and hundreds of rocket-propelled grenades, and RBG launchers". He also stated that three disassembled spy drones found concealed in a truck at the Yemen-Oman border on 12 December 2016 by Yemeni armed forces and a spy drone belonging to the Houthis intercepted in-flight by coalition forces in the Al-Mokha area on 28 January 2017 were a "clear manifestation of the involvement of Iranians in providing the Houthis with weapons and expertise". The Government of Yemen was invited to provide detailed information, documents and images. I will report thereon to the Council accordingly as additional information becomes available.

34. In a letter dated 18 May 2017, the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations brought to the attention of the Secretariat information regarding arms and related materiel seized or recovered by the armed forces of the United Arab Emirates in Yemen since 16 January 2016 that, in the assessment of the United Arab Emirates, were Iranian-made or sourced. This included detailed information and images of anti-tank missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles reportedly seized or recovered by the Presidential Guard forces of the United Arab Emirates. The Secretariat is examining the information and will provide an update to the Council, as appropriate, in due course.

35. In the second report of the Secretary-General, information was provided that arms and related materiel are shipped by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to Hizbullah using commercial flights from the Islamic Republic of Iran, either directly to Beirut or via Damascus (see S/2016/1136, para. 32). In a statement dated 24 November 2016, the Chair of Rafic Hariri International Airport strongly refuted

[7] The KLS is the fixed stock version of the Iranian-produced KL-7.62 mm assault rifle.

those allegations. In identical letters dated 25 January 2017 addressed to me and the President of the Security Council (A/71/770-S/2017/80), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations stated that the letter of the Permanent Representative of Israel dated 21 November 2016 (S/2016/987) contained fabrications and false claims and reiterated that his Government respects its obligations pursuant to international resolutions.

36. Information released by the organizers of the sixth International Defence Exhibition in Iraq, held in Baghdad from 5 to 7 March 2017, indicates that several Iranian entities participated in the exhibition for the second year in a row. According to press coverage of the event, items displayed by those entities appear to have included small arms, artillery ammunition, rockets, anti-tank guided missiles and man-portable air defence systems. The Secretariat again raised the issue with the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations. The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations had previously stated that it believed that no prior approval was required from the Security Council for that activity since the Islamic Republic of Iran retained ownership of the items exhibited. I intend to report thereon to the Council in due course as additional information becomes available.

VI. Implementation of the asset freeze provisions

37. Pursuant to paragraphs 6 (c) and (d) of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), all States shall freeze the funds, other financial assets and economic resources of the individuals and entities on the list maintained pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015)[8] and ensure that no funds, financial assets or economic resources are made available to those individuals and entities.

38. It appears that an entity presently on the list maintained pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015), the Defence Industries Organisation, may have participated again in the International Defence Exhibition in Iraq, which was held in March 2017 (see para. 36 above). Its name is on the exhibitors list released by the organizers of the exhibition and, according to images released by the Iraqi and Iranian media, its official company logo appears on several visual displays next to exhibited items. All of the entity's funds, other financial assets and economic resources on Iraqi territory on the date of adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or at any time thereafter should have been frozen by the Iraqi authorities. The issue was raised again with the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations. I intend to report thereon to the Council in due course.

VII. Implementation of the travel ban provision

39. Pursuant to paragraph 6 (e) of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), all States are to take the measures necessary to prevent the entry into or transit through their territories of the individuals on the list maintained pursuant to resolution 2231

[8] Available from www.un.org/en/sc/2231/list.shtml. The list maintained pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015) includes the individuals and entities specified on the list established under Security Council resolution 1737 (2006) and maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), as at the date of adoption of resolution 2231 (2015), with the exception of 36 individuals and entities specified in the attachment to annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), who were delisted on Implementation Day. The Council can delist individuals or entities, and list additional individuals and entities found to meet certain designation criteria defined in resolution 2231 (2015). There are currently 23 individuals and 61 entities on the list maintained pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015).

(2015). At the time of reporting, no travel exemption requests had been received or granted by the Security Council in relation to individuals presently on the list.

40. Since the issuance of the second report of the Secretary-General, additional information has surfaced regarding travel by Major General Qasem Soleimani. New pictures and video showing the General in the vicinity of Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic, in late December 2016 were reproduced in early January 2017. In February 2017, in an interview with an Iranian media outlet (Tasnim News Agency), the President of Iraq, in response to a question about the presence of the General in Iraq, reportedly stated that "the presence of General Qasem Soleimani is in the context of the presence of foreign military advisors in Iraq". He stressed that Iranian military advisers, including the General, had a right to be present in Iraq, as did advisers from other countries, to provide military advice in the fight against terrorism.

41. Furthermore, in early April 2017, Iranian and Arab media outlets (Fars News Agency, Al-Masdar News) reproduced a picture allegedly showing Major General Soleimani in the central province of Hama in the Syrian Arab Republic for a meeting with officers of the Syrian Arab Army. A few days later, media from the Kurdish region of Iraq (Rudaw Media Network) reported that Major General Soleimani had visited Sulaymaniyah, in Iraqi Kurdistan. Several Iranian and Arab media outlets (Fars News Agency, Al-Masdar News) also reported that the General had been photographed with Iraqi popular mobilization forces in north-western Iraq on 29 May 2017. According to those reports, Major General Soleimani was present in the area as part of an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps advisory mission during an operation of the popular mobilization forces along the Iraq-Syrian Arab Republic border crossing.

VIII. Secretariat support provided to the Security Council and its facilitator for implementation of resolution 2231 (2015)

42. The Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs has continued to support the work of the Security Council and of its facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). The Division has also continued to liaise with the Procurement Working Group of the Joint Commission on all matters related to the procurement channel.

43. The Division continued to promote publicly available information on the restrictions imposed by resolution 2231 (2015) through the Security Council website.[9] Relevant documents were regularly added in all official languages to the website. The Division also continued to use outreach opportunities to promote information on the resolution, in particular the procurement channel, in line with paragraph 6 (e) of the note by the President of the Security Council dated 16 January 2016 (S/2016/44). On 18 January 2017, the Division participated in an export control seminar organized by the Awa Aussenwirtschafts-Akademie (Foreign Trade Academy) in Frankfurt, Germany. On 12 June 2017, the Division also participated in a public awareness-raising seminar related to the procurement channel organized by the Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, held in Vienna.

44. During the reporting period, the Division continued to respond to queries from Member States and to provide relevant support to Member States regarding the provisions of resolution 2231 (2015), in particular on the procedures for the submission of nuclear-related proposals and the review process.

[9] www.un.org/en/sc/2231/.

United Nations S/2017/516

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 June 2017

Original: English

Identical letters dated 16 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Today, a heinous terror attack unfolded in Jerusalem. Three Palestinian terrorists armed with an automatic rifle and knives travelled to the Old City of Jerusalem with the intention of unleashing carnage. Standing in two different locations 100 metres apart, outside the Damascus Gate, they sought to maximize the casualties of their attack.

Thanks to the vigilance of the Israeli police officers at the scene, the attackers were neutralized and a larger-scale terror attack was prevented. In the ensuing confrontation, Hadas Malka, a 22-year-old policewoman, was stabbed to death by the terrorists.

Like in so many of the recent terror attacks against innocent people throughout the world, it is clear that this was not a random act of terror. It was a premeditated and coordinated attack that was calculated to cause the greatest damage to as many victims as possible.

These types of heinous attacks do not take place in a vacuum. They are encouraged by the payments made by the Palestinian Authority to terrorists and their families. As I have written to you recently, according to laws and regulations of the Palestinian Authority, every terrorist arrested, tried and imprisoned receives monthly financial payments. If the terrorist is killed while committing the act, his family receives the payments. It is estimated that over seven per cent of the annual budget of the Palestinian Authority is spent on supporting these terrorists.

While the Palestinian leadership pledges their support for peace, they continue to make these monthly payments to terrorists and educate their children to hate. Just today, the Palestinian Authority not only failed to condemn this act of terror, but the official spokesperson for the Fatah faction of Mahmoud Abbas voiced support for the attack and called the action by our police officers a "war crime". It is clear that such actions incentivize terror. The international community must demand that the Palestinians put an end to this despicable policy.

I call upon the Security Council to immediately and unequivocally condemn this horrific terror attack.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-10083 (E) 210617

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United Nations S/2017/517

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 June 2017

Original: English

Identical letters dated 19 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to call to your attention the ongoing misconduct of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The State of Israel remains concerned regarding the Agency's persistent use of humanitarian funding for the purpose of perpetuating a one-sided narrative about the conflict in our region.

Last month, to promote its fundraising campaign, UNRWA brazenly repurposed a 2014 image of a girl standing among the rubble of a recently bombed building in Qabr Essit, Syria, claiming that she was a young Palestinian from Gaza named Aya. After its fraudulent act was exposed, UNRWA removed the picture from its website but, adding insult to injury, refused to offer a real apology, instead blaming the post on a technical error.

This incident is just the latest symptom of the Agency's negligence and inability to remain neutral, which is consistently plaguing its conduct. The Agency has become notorious for its employees' often egregious acts, including bias and incitement against Israel in UNRWA classrooms and calls for violence on social media.

UNRWA personnel have even been found within the ranks of terrorist organizations. In February 2016, Israeli authorities revealed that the Chairman of the UNRWA Staff Union in the Gaza Strip and Principal of the UNRWA boys' elementary school for refugee children, Suhail al-Hindi, had been elected to the political bureau of Hamas, an internationally designated terror organization. Just last week, we learned that this same Hamas had dug terror tunnels under two UNRWA schools similar to that under al-Hindi's supervision.

Alarmingly, al-Hindi's affiliation with Hamas was not an isolated incident, but part of an established and ongoing trend. Muhammad al-Jamasi, presented in Palestinian media as head of the UNRWA engineering department, was also reportedly elected to the Hamas political bureau.

Only after being faced with incontrovertible evidence of his terrorist connection did UNRWA suspend al-Hindi, providing no further information on the circumstances of his termination. The UNRWA Commissioner-General confirmed al-Hindi's dismissal only when my delegation questioned him publicly about the incident. Even then, the UNRWA representative failed to mention al-Hindi's

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involvement in a terrorist organization. UNRWA still has neither taken responsibility for its misconduct regarding al-Hindi nor provided any details about the Muhammad al-Jamasi case.

On 12 June 2017, the UNRWA Commissioner-General issued a statement assessing the situation in the Gaza Strip that omitted any mention of Hamas' decade-long control of the area and its detrimental impact on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Regrettably, the Commissioner-General has also failed to condemn Hamas' active obstruction of the work of humanitarian agencies on the ground, as well as its abuse of United Nations facilities and diversion of humanitarian aid for military purposes.

UNRWA is an organization with the power, not to mention the responsibility, to speak out against terror and educate the next generation of Palestinians towards peace and reconciliation. My delegation should not be held accountable for reminding UNRWA of its obligation to condemn the exploitation of United Nations agencies and humanitarian aid by terrorists. The Agency's silence in the face of these abuses is deafening.

It is high time that UNRWA stopped promoting a particular narrative and assumed responsibility for any misconduct by its staff and affiliates. It must fulfil its duty to provide a neutral and honest account that represents the real situation on the ground, rather than presenting facts in manners that serve the promotion of a subjective political narrative.

UNRWA, just as all United Nations agencies and bodies, must be held to the highest standards of transparency, accountability and neutrality.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative